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U.S.-MADE
KNIVES PG.36

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NETWORK

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ISSUE 18

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EXCLUSIVE

FIRST
LOOK

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- ▶ 1,000-YARD AR-15: 6MM MOUSEGUN
- ▶ VERSATILE CAN: LIBERTY SUPPRESSORS' MYSTIC X
- ▶ VEGAS OFF-ROAD EXPERIENCE
- ▶ PT: KETTLEBELLS
- ▶ SELF-DEFENSE: TOMAHAWK CQB
- ▶ SHTF: TOURNIQUET 101

TOMAHAWK
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▶ USM4,
Ops-Core,
S&S Precision,
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FURIOUS 7

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bad ass /'bad as/:
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noun 1. Grey Ghost Gear

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FIREARM SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY

RECOIL reminds you to be safe and always obey firearms safety rules:

1. Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
2. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
4. Be aware of your target's foreground and background.

All contents in RECOIL Magazine are professionally photographed in a closed studio or range. Do not attempt to recreate any photographs depicted in this magazine.



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RECOIL (USPS 013-320), May/June 2015; Number 18, is published bimonthly by TEN: The Enthusiast Network, LLC, 261 Madison Avenue, 6th floor, New York, NY 10016. Copyright © 2015 by TEN: The Enthusiast Network Magazines, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Periodicals Postage Paid at New York, NY and at additional mail offices. Subscriptions U.S. and U.S. Possessions: \$49.97 per year (6 issues); Canadian, \$55.97, Foreign, \$61.97 (including surface mail postage). Payment in advance. U.S. funds only. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 707.4.12.5): NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: send address changes to RECOIL, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Please allow 8-10 weeks for delivery of first issue. No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission. This book is purchased with the understanding that the information presented herein is from many varied sources for which there can be no warranty or responsibility by the publisher as to accuracy or completeness.



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1 RIFLE

See our "Zeroed In" article on Mark Owen on page 80

2 HELMET

MAKE: Ops-Core
MODEL: FAST Ballistic Maritime Helmet
MSRP: \$1,145 to \$1,184
URL: www.ops-core.com

3 STROBE

MAKE: S&S Precision
MODEL: Manta Strobe
MSRP: \$200
URL: www.sandsprecision.com

4 LED LIGHT

MAKE: Princeton Tec
MODEL: Charge — MPLS
MSRP: \$95
URL: www.princeton tec.com

5 GOGGLES

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MODEL: GPNVG-18
URL: www.insighttechnology.com

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7 SHOULDER HOLSTER

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► BY IAIN HARRISON

A SEAL, a vegan, and a crossfit enthusiast walk up to you in a bar. Which one tells you first?

RECOIL is no stranger to controversy, which is why in this issue we feature an exclusive interview with the SEAL formerly known as Mark Owen. An ostensibly polarizing figure within the SF community due to writing a pair of bestselling books, the decision to interview him was not taken lightly. As part of our due diligence we took input from other Naval Special Warfare guys and compared the content of *No Easy Day* to material leaked by the White House in furtherance of the incumbent's 2012 reelection campaign. In short, we concluded that the Pentagon's accusations that he compromised operational security were hypocritical at best and a politically motivated character assassination at their core. Which is about par for this administration.

We tend to steer clear of politics in these pages, generally wishing a pox on both houses and mindful that if you associate with swine, you quickly wind up smelling like pig shit. Unfortunately, politicians can't seem to reciprocate the favor, and keep inserting themselves into our chosen lifestyle and trying to restrict our rights. Unable to pass any gun control measures in the past two years, the executive branch has resorted

to behavior no doubt familiar to anyone who has taken care of a toddler. Only in this case, instead of screaming and thrashing around on the floor, they opted to petulantly restrict imports of 7N6 ammunition, change the regulations of NFA trusts, reverse an ATF opinion on use of the SB15 brace, and most recently reclassify M855 projectiles as armor piercing, in order to criminalize the sale of one of the country's most popular rounds for its most prolific rifle.

To borrow a phrase from an overused teleprompter, let me be perfectly clear. None of these proposals increase public safety, nor are they designed to. Instead, they're payback for not rolling over when our supposed superiors wanted to offer us up for sacrifice on the altar of public opinion in 2013.

Let's dissect the latest of these. The BATFE's stated reason for the proposed ban on M855 is to "protect the lives and safety of law enforcement officers from the threat posed by ammunition capable of penetrating a protective vest when fired from a handgun," citing the availability of AR-15 pistols. When you consider that *any* .223 ball ammunition fired from an AR-15 pistol will defeat the most commonly used soft armor used by law enforcement, it doesn't take much in the way of mental gymnastics to see

where this might ultimately lead. Unfortunately, the public comment period for this proposal will be closed by the time RECOIL hits the shelves, but you can still make your voice heard. If you haven't already contacted your representatives and let them know that you unequivocally oppose this proposal, please do so. You may end up with a slight agricultural odor, but it's better than the alternative.



INBOUND

What's the ideal concealed-carry weapon? Ever wondered what CCW pistols the experts use? And what you should do in a real-life situation? We're tackling these issues and much more in a special issue called **CONCEALMENT**. We review the latest carry handguns, talk to the industry's top trainers, and go in-depth on the entire topic of concealed carry. Look for **CONCEALMENT** where **RECOIL** and **OFFGRID** are sold, starting April 10, 2015.

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CONFIGURATION



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Printed in the USA



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[81.3-89.5cm]
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1

We all love SureFire torches, but not everyone has the bank account to afford them. Fortunately, there are other manufacturers making solid illumination tools for those who hope to satiate their seared ahi appetites with Chicken of the Sea budgets. LA Police Gear is one such company. For a reasonable \$60, its Operator L1 Flashlight delivers up to 800 lumens at 200 meters, thanks to its Cree XM-L2 LED. It has four modes, including strobe, and is waterproof up to 3 meters. It comes with two CR123 batteries and a nylon holster.

MAKE:

LA Police Gear

MODEL:

Operator L1 Flashlight

MSRP:

\$60

URL:www.lapolicygear.com

2

We've said it before, and we'll say it again — the AR-15 platform is the best LEGO set ever invented. Strike Industries takes that to heart with their new Ultimate Selector Switches, providing an ambidextrous safety selector with 10 different levers to choose from. The selector drum is steel and threaded on both ends to accept the levers, made of polymer. There are thick and thin, and short and long levers. Some sport studs. And some protrude further, like a seesaw — so you can push on it with your thumb to safe the weapon. This is an interesting concept; we weren't so keen on it after some fiddling, but it might grow on you. Plus there are 10, count 'em 10, options, so you'll certainly find one that you like.

MAKE:

Strike Industries

MODEL:

Ultimate Selector Switches

MSRP:

\$40

URL:www.strikeindustries.com

3

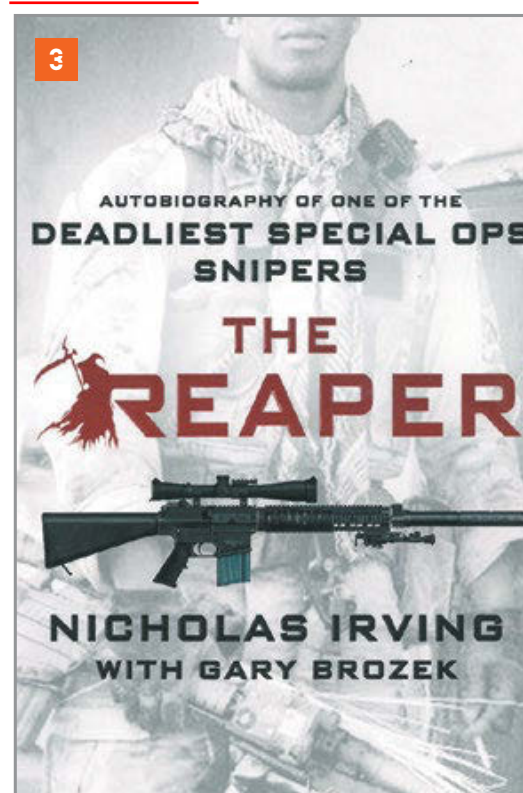
Nicholas Irving served for six years in the Army's 3rd Ranger Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment, as an assaulter, machine gunner, and sniper team leader. He was such a prolific sniper during his deployment to Afghanistan, with 33 confirmed EKIA, that he earned the nickname "The Reaper." This book chronicles his military career and provides a detailed firsthand account of his combat missions and the life of a sniper. Irving pulls no punches and makes no apologies — and we're glad for it. Pick up a copy; it's a good read.

PUBLISHER:

St. Martin's Press

TITLE:*The Reaper: Autobiography of One of the Deadliest Special Ops Snipers***MSRP:**

\$28 (hardcover)

URL:www.stmartins.com

4

The ALG Defense 6 Second Mount was originally designed for a counter-terrorism group looking for a frame-mounted red-dot solution for their Glocks to be used in cramped linear environments like an airplane or a bus. In these situations, the pistol is their primary weapon, and "the fight lasts 6 seconds" — hence the name. The end users wanted the advantages of mounting the optic to the weapon rather than the slide, and they didn't need to worry about concealment. The mount accepts the bombproof Aimpoint Micro sight and weighs 3.1 ounces with all of its hardware. It secures to your Glock by replacing a pin and utilizing the frametail — it's recommended that you remove the rear sight so you can field strip and service the weapon without removing the mount.

MAKE:

ALG Defense

MODEL:

6 Second Mount

MSRP:

\$250 (black), \$265 (desert dirt, gray, and purple)

URL:www.algdefense.com

5

For those of us fortunate to be able to find .22 LR ammo, Taccom's ultralight upper makes for a great training tool. Due to its carbon-fiber handguard and sleeved barrel, the complete upper weighs in at a feathery 2.4 pounds and points like a magic wand. Best of all, whereas .22 LR conversion kits can be temperamental at best, the one we tested ran like an angry ape with every brand of rimfire fodder we stuffed in the mag.

MAKE:

Taccom

MODEL:

Ultralight 22LR upper

MSRP:

\$475

URL:

www.taccom3g.com

6

Owned and operated by former special-operations professionals, Pipe Hitters Union offers a range of fashionable apparel and swag to express the warrior lifestyle. The Gunfighter's Prayer T-shirt is quickly becoming one of their most popular designs. According to the Urban Dictionary, a Pipe Hitter is "someone or a group of people who are willing to go to the extreme in order to get things accomplished. Also known as a 'Heavy Hitter.'" 'Nuff said. Weapons free.

MAKE:

Pipe Hitters Union

MODEL:

Gunfighter's Prayer T-shirt

MSRP:

\$28

URL:

www.pipehittersunion.com

7

The downsides to conventional rail systems can be found in the material they're carved from. While aluminum is lightweight, easy to machine, and has adequate strength, it also has excellent thermal conductivity, which is why your pans are made of the same stuff. Good for cooking eggs, bad for cooking your support hand. Ascendance molds its handguards out of a polymer that would make for absolutely useless cookwear, as it hardly conducts heat at all — leaving your digits comfortably cool after several mag dumps.

MAKE:

Ascendance International

MODEL:

QDR-7 Handguard

MSRP:

\$158

URL:

www.ascendanceintl.com

8

Entire Internet forum flame wars have broken out over the topic of staking the bolt key on AR-15 bolt carrier groups (BCGs). VooDoo Innovations extinguishes those flames by machining the carrier and bolt key as a single unit — no more worries about torque values, staking screws, or bolt key separation. Moreover, the one-piece construction allows VDI to provide a clean path through which the gas can flow. The carriers are machined from 8260 forgings and bolts from Mil-spec C158 steel (MPI tested and shot peened). VDI's LifeCoat process combines a nickel coating with a physical vapor deposition treatment (see RECOIL Issue 13 for more on finishes). VDI offers the bolt carriers by themselves and with bolts, and in standard guise (11.2 ounces for complete BCG) as well as lightened low-mass versions (9.5 ounces). The cotter pins on our samples spread their legs like it was prom night, so they were a bit fussy to reinstall — but nothing our handy dental pick couldn't easily handle.

MAKE:

VooDoo Innovations

MODEL:

LifeCoat Direct Impingement Integral Bolt Carrier Group

MSRP:

\$222 (standard), \$251 (low mass)

URL:

www.voodooinnovations.com



5



6



7



8

9

Have you ever hopped in the shower, only to realize that you're out of shampoo? Late for work, you grab your wife's designer shampoo and get to scrubbing. But then that scent of candy or fruity coconuts or whatever the hell "botanical formula" means hits you — and your manhood just shrivels up. Screw that. Grab a hold of Duke Cannon's Superior Grade Hair Wash for "news anchor thick" hair. They say it has protein, vitamin B5, tea tree oil, and other gobbledygook. We shoot guns, we don't know what the hell that stuff is. But breathe in the menthol, and you'll march right out of the shower like a man. The packaging states, "DIRECTIONS: It's presumed you don't need directions to use this product." Hell yeah.

MAKE:
Duke Cannon Supply Co.

MODEL:
Super Grade Hair Wash

MSRP:
\$13

URL:
www.dukecannon.com



10

Speaking of bathrooms, Breakthrough's cleaning solvent and oil look just as home on a travertine counter as on your bench in the garage. In fact, they're eco-friendly, non-carcinogenic, and virtually odor free, so you could clean and lube your guns in the bathroom if you wanted, and your wife wouldn't even know. In particular, note that the solvent is petroleum-based, not water-based, without the time-worn toxicity concerns — and it's single purpose, cleaning but not lubricating. Follow it with Battle Born Oil, which is designed to be thinner in consistency to maximize coverage. Where grease is a better lubrication choice, reach for the handy syringe of Battle Born Grease, which includes PTFE (commonly known as Teflon).

MAKE:
Breakthrough

MODEL:
Military-Grade Cleaning Solvent, Battle Born Oil, and Battle Born Grease

MSRP:
\$9 to \$17

URL:
www.breakthroughclean.com

11

America Grip created a clever tool kit that attaches to a Picatinny rail, keeping a driver and bits close at hand whenever you're in the field, at the range, or on duty. It comes with four grip panels, made of ABS plastic, which both store bits and can be assembled together to form a handle. You can slip a bit into the center hole, though it isn't retained and can fall out, or use one of the side loops where the bits fit snugly. The kit includes eight 2-inch hex bits — two Phillips heads, a flat head, #1 square head, and four Torx star heads (T10, T15, T20, and T25). The panels are available in a variety of colors, from tactical to fashionable.

MAKE:
America Grip

MODEL:
Tool Grip

MSRP:
\$25

URL:
www.americagrip.com



12

While that story your mom used to tell you about losing most of your body heat through your head is a myth, her heart was in the right place. It's always a good idea to keep your noggin warm in cold weather, and Magpul's skull beanie gets the job done with style. It's made of 100-percent acrylic and features woven skull and Magpul logos. Available in heather grey and true black.

MAKE:
Magpul

MODEL:
Skull Beanie

MSRP:
\$22

URL:
www.magpul.com



13

SKD Tactical's PIG FDT Alpha gloves have earned a reputation for being very thoughtfully designed tactical gloves that strike a balance between providing protection and retaining a high level of dexterity. They're purpose designed for shooters, with everything from a single layer palm, to thin Clarino on the trigger finger, to flex joints in just the right places. The Alpha Touch model, which ensures that you can take selfies and text your buddies from the range, is now available in carbon gray.

MAKE:
SKD Tactical

MODEL:
Patrol Incident Gear Full Dexterity Tactical Alpha Touch Gloves

MSRP:
\$43

URL:
www.skdtac.com



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A LONG TIME COMING

IN AN EXCLUSIVE, WE GET OUR HANDS ON THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED SINGLE-STACK 9MM G43

BY DAVID REEDER

The single-stack 9mm Glock 43 has been a long time coming. No other Glock pistol to date has been quite so anticipated or talked about — nor the subject of such speculation, grumbling, and contention. Many people were dismayed, even angered, when it did not show up this year at the SHOT Show.

So let's answer the two most obvious questions: "Is it worth the wait?" and "Why now; what took so long?" We'll get to the former question in a bit; first we'll answer the latter.

WHY NOW?

Of course, part of it is the juxtaposition of import laws and Glock USA's recently developed production capacity

at their facility in Smyrna, Georgia. Before, when they were assembling and distributing handguns from components built in Austria, smaller pistols like the 42 and 43 could not be imported into the United States. There's a BATFE-driven point system in place (a largely arbitrary and in many ways inexplicable point system) that must be used to bring a handgun into the country. That obstacle was removed once they were able to build the weapons right there in Georgia.

However, according to Glock Vice President Josh Dorsey, it mostly came down to the allocation of resources in response to their customer needs. They only have a finite amount of

resources to apply against numerous areas on which end users would like them focused. For instance, in addition to addressing the commercial market in the USA, Glock was addressing DoD's modular handgun system (MHS) program, the law enforcement market, and the export market.

Being a predominantly Big Army project, the MHS program comes with a litany of requirements, as well as the certainty of ambiguity and delay. As for the commercial market, it's important to remember that while the clamor for a single-stack Glock 9mm has been unceasing here in the States, on an international scale it was the .380 model that Glock says required attention first.

Many have been dubious of the timing. *The G42 was released last year, the thought goes, so they could make more money. After all, who would buy a .380 G42 if a 9mm G43 was available, right?*

That would be a great theory if the G42 wasn't selling so well, in so many places.

We asked Dorsey the question point blank, "Did the 42 preempt the 43 so the former didn't impact sales of the latter, or so people would buy both?" He shook his head dryly. He's aware of the grumbling of the U.S. customer base. He's a realist.

"Way back when we decided the timing of everything, the driving force was not the commercial market, it was the allocation of resources to other events. If they're going to say that — one, we don't believe the cannibalization is going to be that bad, maybe some, but there's not going to be 50 percent, 60 percent of the .380, and two, it's not the answer. We were focused on another program that, at the time, a year ago, year and a half ago, was...in theory...going to start in January of this year."

As it turns out, the G42 is the highest-selling handgun Glock makes right now. It's not just concealed carriers in the USA buying it (though they are, in great numbers) — there are whole continents full of countries with a tradition of gun ownership where owning 9x19mm is illegal because it's considered a military round. The G42 is extremely popular, for instance, in Brazil, Thailand, and the Philippines.

IS IT WORTH THE WAIT?

There's a very good chance the G42 will be supplanted by the G43 here in America. At just a bit over 6 inches long, with a slide width of less than an inch and a weight of about 1 pound, the G43 is extremely easy to conceal. Its magazine capacity is 6 rounds.

It also shoots very nicely. Put a few rounds through it and you too may find yourself grinning like an idiot. The trigger pull is crisp, smooth, and consistent, and with a distance from backstrap to trigger of just 2.6 inches, it'll be very appealing to shooters not just looking for a hideaway or a backup, but to those with smaller hands.

We put several magazines through a G43 at the Glock Professional indoor range facility a few weeks ago with some of the Glock USA staff — they



< Left to right:
G42, G43, G26

were as excited to shoot it as we were, as many of them hadn't handled one yet. We shot it two-handed, strong side only, support side only, stationary and moving.

So what's the verdict? Yes indeed, it is absolutely worth the wait. It's exactly what so many of you have been wanting for years, and it's an absolute pleasure to shoot. Look for it to debut in April at the NRA Annual meeting in Nashville, and to start shipping immediately after that. **R**

SPEC BOX

GLOCK

G43

URL

www.glock.com

CALIBER

9mm Luger

BARREL LENGTH

3.39 inches

OVERALL LENGTH

6.26 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY

6 rounds

WEIGHT (EMPTY)

1.12 pounds

MSRP

\$580

LIÈGE, BELGIUM

NOT JUST CHOCOLATE AND WAFFLES

BY IAIN HARRISON

When your most famous recent exports include Tintin, the Smurfs, and Jean Claude Van Damme, it's hard to be taken seriously in the gun world.

Fabrique National Herstal (FNH) and the legions of gun-makers that emanated from the city of Liège have absolutely nothing in common with the clown show above, apart from hailing

from the same country that came into existence in 1830. Prior to the formation of modern-day Belgium, Liège had a political history unique among European cities of the middle ages. Instead of the usual arrangement whereby the nobleman with the biggest army got to grind the faces of poor peasants, those citizens of Liège belonging to trade-men's guilds decided that just wasn't going to fly, and in 1345 overthrew the local prince. For over 100 years, democracy reigned, which was unheard of until 1776 and all that.

Those same guilds were responsible for turning Liège into a center of arms manufacturing. Due to its strategic position on the Meuse river, Liège-made armor, swords, and firearms shipped throughout Europe. Once the Industrial Revolution got rolling, the city became one of the largest steel manufacturing centers on the continent. With an ample supply of raw material, labor, and intellectual capital, the gun industry took off.



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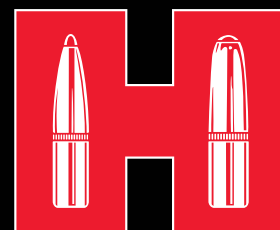
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GRAND CURTIUS MUSEUM

To house and display over 700 years of firearms history, two museums came into being, both of which are currently undergoing expansion. The first of these is housed in the mansion and business premises of Jean Curtius, an ammunition merchant who made his fortune supplying the Spanish army in the late 16th century. Located on the banks of the Meuse, the Grand Curtius Museum currently houses permanent collections of archeological artifacts, religious art, glasswork, and of course the one we're interested in.

As the visitor enters the imposing medieval courtyard, they're greeted by several iron artillery pieces dating back to the days of siege warfare, when they were employed to breach castle walls or hurl explosive rounds over the ramparts. Field artillery of a different age

1 Christophe and Montigny system mitrailieuse. With a theoretical rate of fire of 296 rounds per minute from replaceable 37-round magazines, it provided effective fire support until the advent of the machine gun.

2 The Grand Curtius also has examples of local Medieval weapons.

3 Liège was famous not only for its arms, but also for armor. This ceremonial breastplate is from the 19th century.

4 The ornate pair of percussion pistols shown here are fine examples of the work of French gunsmith Alfred Gauvain.

LIÈGE, BELGIUM



is encountered on the way to the more recent exhibits, as a pair of manually operated machine guns, contemporaries of Dr. Gatling's creation, guard the entrance. Inside, cases of wheel locks, flintlocks, swords, bayonets, and intricately engraved presentation pieces give way to more modern firearms as the guest charts the development of projectile weapons.

Some of the artifacts on display are examples of working guns, service weapons of the various armies that employed them. Others are stunning masterpieces, ornately engraved, intricately inlaid, and stocked with the finest exotic woods. Some came from

the workshops of the companies that would eventually band together to form Fabrique National in order to land a juicy contract for 150,000 Mauser rifles for the Belgian government.

Not all of the guns on display are European — there are several notable examples of American innovation such as an 1887 Spencer pump-action, a Dardick pistol and carbine, a Guide Lamp Liberator, as well as a Chicago Firearms "lemon squeezer" pistol. Medieval arms and armor are well represented, as are the guns of both World Wars — particularly poignant for the area, as Liège was captured by the Germans in both 1914 and 1939.



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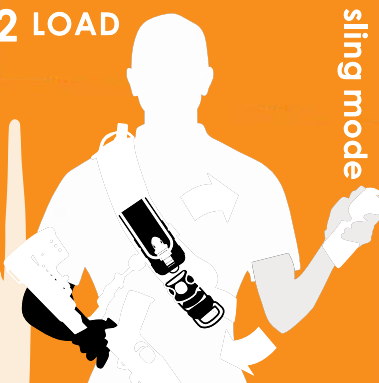
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2 LOAD



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3 ENGAGE



1 Display cases at the Ars Mechanica Foundation contain prototypes and early examples of significant FN products from the last 125 years.

2 The opportunity to handle prototypes crafted by JMB's own hands was too much to pass up.

3 12-gauge revolving shotgun, designed for use in trench warfare.

4 Mauser 1918 T-Gewehr anti tank rifle in 13.2x92mm caliber.

5 Because of constantly changing barrel-length laws in the colonies, export pistols were often shipped cojoined, so the local retailer could chop the barrels to legal length.

6 9mm Fiat Revelli of 1918. The world's second submachine gun.



LIÈGE, BELGIUM



ARS MECHANICA FOUNDATION

Although extensive, wide ranging, and beautifully laid out with vital information on each of the guns on display (in French, so take a phrase book), the Grand Curtius Museum focuses on the many manufacturers that made their names in the city of Liege. Since 1889, the town has been synonymous with FNH, and it is with this company that the Ars Mechanica Foundation concerns itself. Currently, the collection is located within the secure area of the sprawling FN plant, but this year sees its relocation outside the wire where it will be accessible to a much wider audience.

The Ars Mechanica Foundation is the passion of curator Robert Sauvage — dismayed at the thought of unique samples, drawings, and information being consigned to dusty corners of the factory (or worse still, launched into a dumpster during periodic reorganizations), he lobbied for the creation of a space where historical artifacts could be put on display.

John Moses Browning's long relationship with FNH is celebrated here, as you might expect given that he passed away in his office in FN's headquarters building. He then lay in state in its boardroom, while the entire workforce filed past to show

their respect for the man they called "The Master." During our visit, we got to hold the prototype of the Browning A5 shotgun — for gun geeks, knowing that JMB touched a file to its raw receiver is somewhat akin to receiving communion from the Holy Grail.

Other firearms on display include the second FAL to come off the production line (the king of Belgium has the first one, and he's not giving it back), prototype MAG58 and Minimi machine guns, Winchester commemorative lever guns, and of course Hi-Powers galore. The crowning glory for this scribe, however, was the prototype FAL in .280 British, which were it not



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for the mendacity of the Ordnance Board, may well have become *the* service rifle of the 20th century. Others may appreciate the prototype FN Model D, which Browning's colleague and co-designer of the Hi-Power, Dieudonné Saive, developed from the BAR, adding a rate reducer, better gas valve, and the quick-change barrel mechanism later seen on the M240.

At the conclusion of World War I, no one was buying firearms anymore, so FNH was forced to adapt to new market conditions. Having already demonstrated engineering proficiency in the transportation industry (by building chainless bikes for the Belgian armed forces), focus switched to a more diverse portfolio including motorcycles, cars, trucks, and even milking machines. Examples of these and their art deco marketing posters can be found on display. Most are in working condition, a fact proven by Sauvage, who took us for spin around the plant in a 1925 roadster.

Located less than an hour ride from the battlefields of the Ardennes and the last resting place of thousands of American troops, Liège deserves to be added to the itinerary if you find yourself in Central Europe. The rich history of the area is embodied in the guns it continues to produce that can be found in both the Curtius and Ars Mechanica Foundation museums. **R**

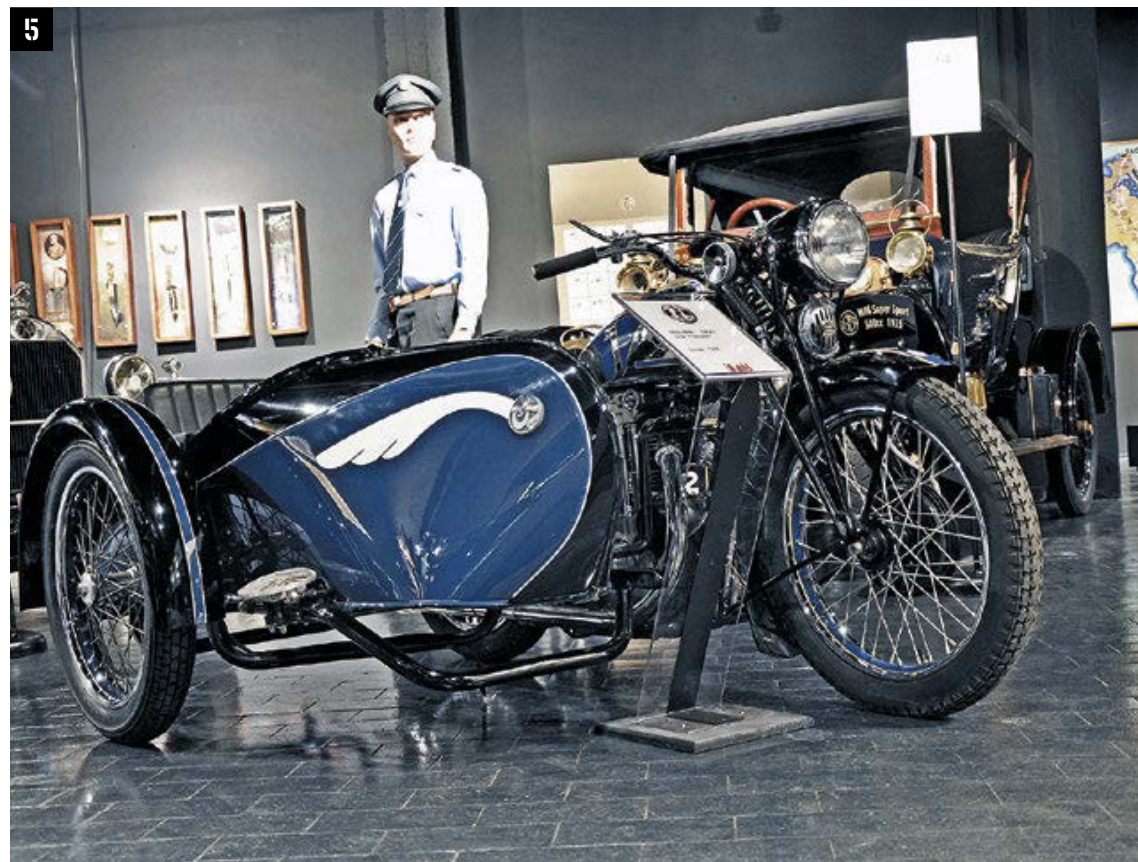
1 Serial number 002 of the free world's right arm.

2 Ornate, finely engraved commemorative Hi-Power, celebrating the 125th year of FNH.

3 Straight-line stock, good ergonomics, and light recoil from an intermediate 7mm caliber assault rifle. This prototype FAL in 280 British showed what we could have had in 1959. Instead, we got the M14.

4 Evolution of the BAR. Quick-change barrel, using a MAG 58-style ratchet system.

5 FNH also produced some of the best looking bikes of the 1920s and '30s.



GRAND CURTIUS MUSEUM

ADDRESS:
Féronstrée 136 - 4000 Liège

HOURS:
10 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed Tuesdays

ADMISSION:
5 Euros

URL:
www.grandcurtiusliege.be

ARS MECHANICA FOUNDATION

ADDRESS:
Rue Voie De Liege, Herstal

HOURS:
By appointment, late 2015

ADMISSION:
N/A



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01
02
03
04
TRANSPORT
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24
25
26

5

6

Since we know there's no one-size-fits-all tactical vehicle out there, this month we bring you another "category" to further jostle your imagination as to what exactly you might need.

Whether you call it a UTV, ATV, or side-by-side, this type of four-wheeled off-roader is definitely gaining in popularity, and as described in previous articles, they can go places that a fully loaded four-wheel-drive truck just can't. In many states, these vehicles can be outfitted with horns, turn signals, mirrors, and other accessories to make them street legal — furthering their level of practicality. And since quite a few of them boast four-stroke motors, you can run straight off pump gas. How wild can you really get with these? Well,

if you're Hans Luenger, putting limits on a build is not in your vocabulary.

As owner of HMF Racing, a builder of aftermarket race components for off-road vehicles, Hans is no stranger to the industry. He chose a 2014 Polaris RZR 1000 for its versatility, and because maintenance and component accessibility was comparatively easy. What initially began as a race-type vehicle eventually snowballed into a more tactical, apocalyptic theme. You can see by the pictures that this decked-out UTV should probably be using the acronym WTF instead. So if you've only thought something of the full-size pickup persuasion could be kitted out with some serious trimmings, think again.

1 SEATS

MAKE:
Mastercraft
MODEL:
3G
URL:
www.hmfracing.com

2 LIGHT BAR

MAKE:
Race Parts Online
MODEL:
38-inch
URL:
www.rpopowersports.com

3 CAMO WRAP

MAKE:
Avery Dennison
URL:
www.averydennison.com

4 NERF BARS

MAKE:
HMF/IQ
URL:
www.hmfracing.com

5 HID LIGHTS

MAKE:
Baja Designs
MODEL:
(1) Spot / (1) Pencil Beam
URL:
www.bajadesigns.com

6 WINCH

MAKE:
Superwinch
MODEL:
4,500-pound w/
synthetic rope
URL:
www.superwinch.com

Powering this nimble little ride is the factory 1,000cc engine that Hans upgraded with his proprietary HMF Dual Full exhaust package to lower weight and increase horsepower, as well as one of their Optimizer engine management systems to control the fuel curve. A UMP air filter was added to handle dusty conditions that could decrease aspiration. The stock CVT drivetrain, which can switch between 2WD and 4WD, was also given a racier TEAM clutch and Gates belts. Hans cut down the factory cage and redid it himself for a sleeker look and to add more room for roof racks, equipment, and the two solar panels that can charge both batteries in five hours with direct sunlight.

To carry additional gear, suspension duties were modified courtesy of HCR dual A-arms, Walker Evans 2.5-inch shocks, and PAC springs. What additional gear, you ask? For illumination there's not only two Baja Designs HID lights but also a 38-inch LED light bar up top. A 1,000-watt Yamaha generator in the rear and 4,500-pound Superwinch in the front with synthetic rope are also handy tools to have when needed. The Hi-Lift jackstand mounted on the side can help with extrication or any sudden repairs. Custom front and rear racks provide additional storage space, while the front rack doubles as a protective cage and the rear folds down for a table, perfect for your portable stove to sit on.

A rear-mounted camera gives the driver eyes in the back of his head and is viewed through a Pyle LCD screen inside the cockpit. Doors were convert-



ed from suicide style to standard and have integrated netting for protection. The factory center panel was replaced by a custom switch panel to operate the lights, auxiliary fan, and interior LEDs. Add to that a PCI helmet cam system so driver and passenger can hear each other, and you have one pretty dialed-in duo.

Don't worry, we didn't forget about the guns. If you saw the RPG rocket sitting on top, we regret to inform you that it's a demilled unit — but at least it's a cool conversation piece and could work to bludgeon someone to death if you had nothing else for protection. Although not pictured,



1 SPRINGS

MAKE:
PAC Racing Springs
URL:
www.racingsprings.com

2 SHOCKS

MAKE:
Walker Evans
MODEL:
2.5-inch
URL:
www.walkerevansracing.com

3 REAR STORAGE RACK

MAKE:
HMF Racing
MODEL:
custom
URL:
www.hmfracing.com

4 EXHAUST

MAKE:
HMF Racing
MODEL:
Polaris RZR XP 1000
Dual Full System
URL:
www.hmfracing.com

5 TRAILING ARMS

MAKE:
HCR Racing
URL:
www.hcrracing.com

6 TIRES

MAKE:
Maxxis
MODEL:
Bighorn 30-inch
URL:
www.maxxis.com

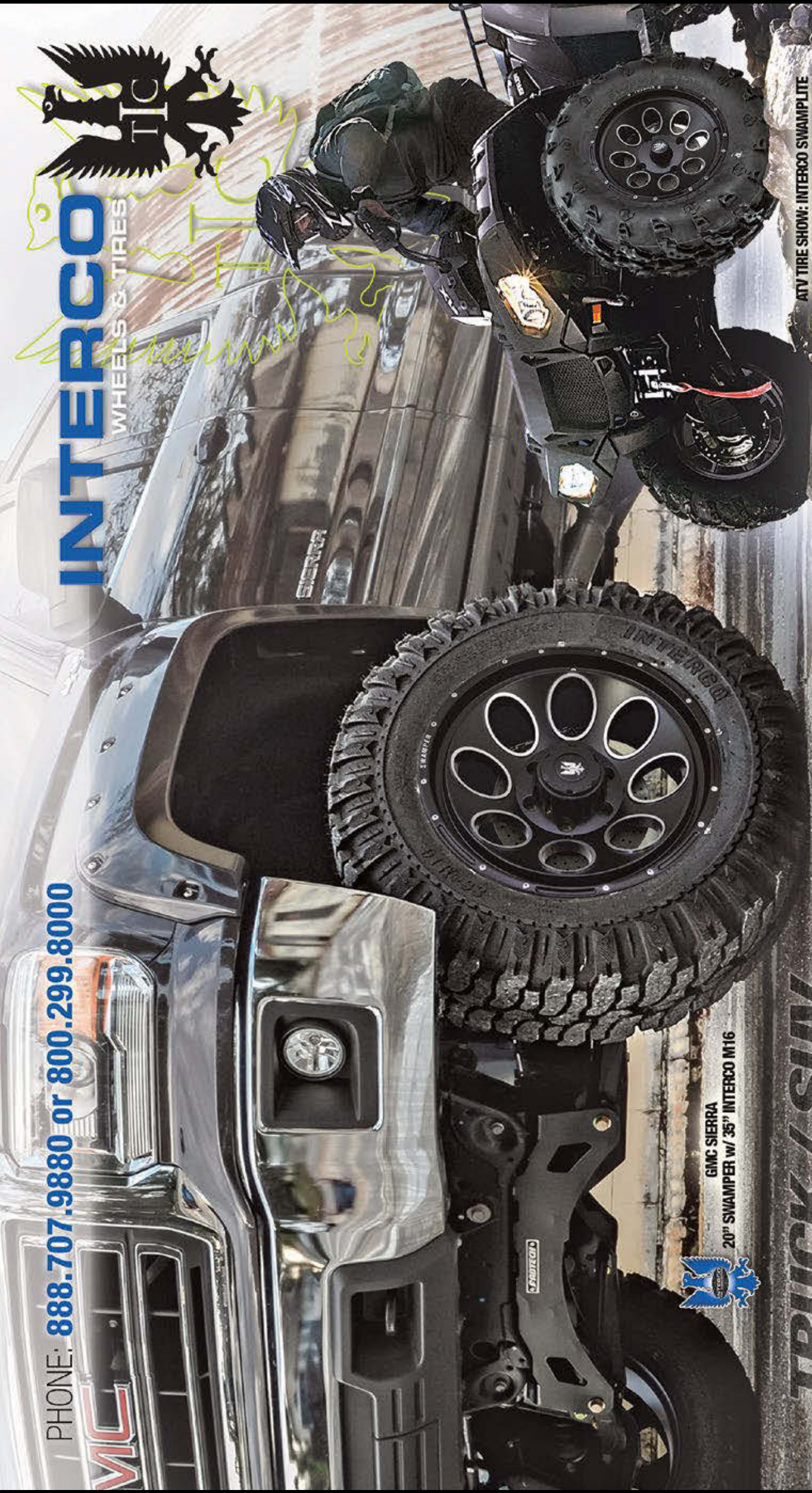
7 WHEELS

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MODEL:
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SATIN BLACK
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ATV / UTV

Swamper



SATIN BLACK MACHINED
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SATIN BLACK
12x7, 14x7, 17X7

ATV TIRE SHOW: INTERCO SWAMPLITE

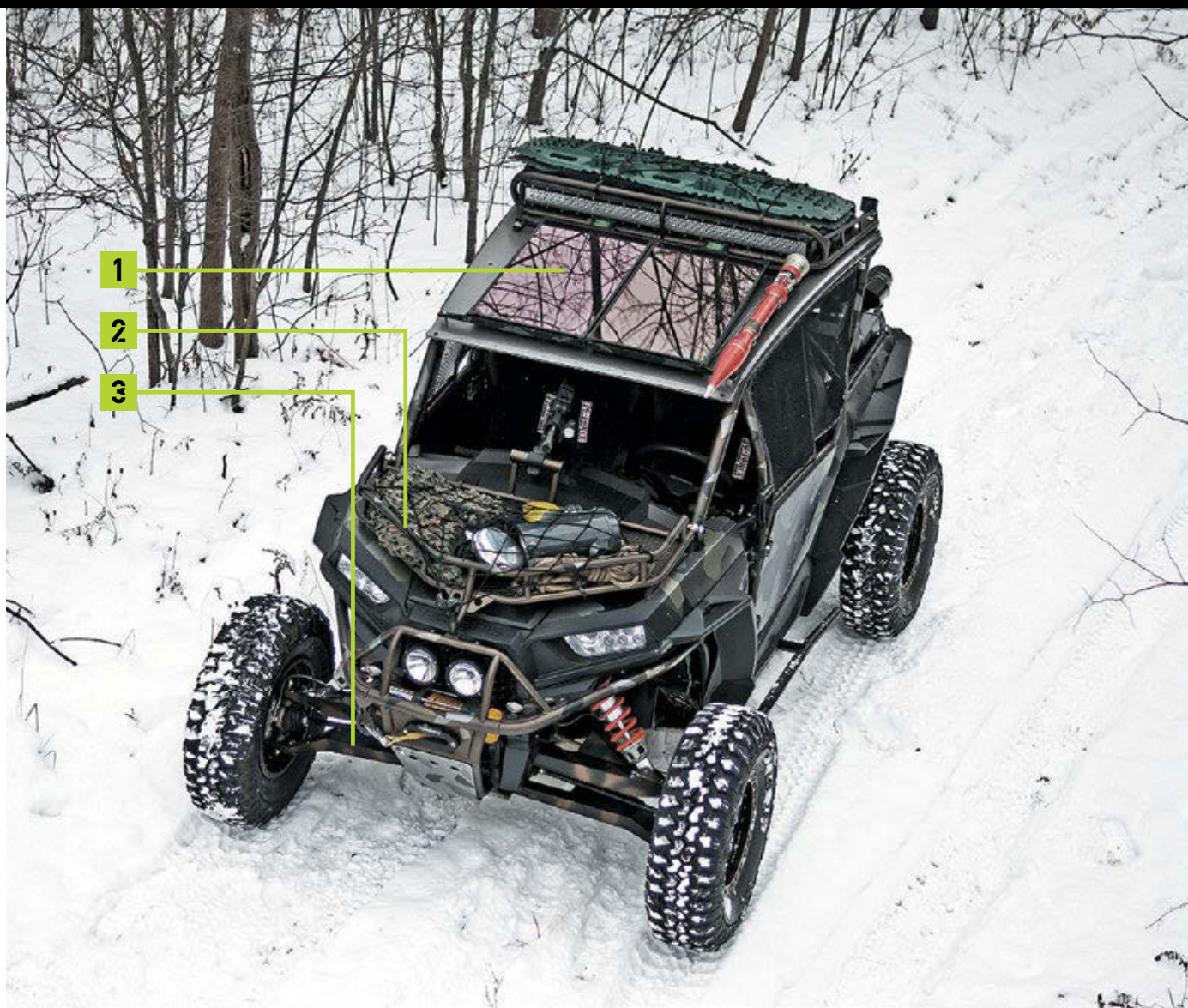
M16 RADIAL IROK THORNBIRD VORTRAC



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Hans has been known to keep a front-mounted Slide Fire BFR-556A, which will make short work of oncoming “traffic.” Behind the fireproof Mastercraft 3G seats resides a Mossberg 500 12-gauge, and the driver’s door holds a .45 ACP 1911 for extra peace of mind. If you just so happen to run out of ammo on all those, you can always reach for the United Cutlery M48 tomahawk, spare machete, or one of the CRKT knives in the cab. Lastly, the Avery Dennison camo wrap will help keep you incognito. In other words, you have more safety measures than Ralph Nader could’ve dreamed up in his wildest hallucinations.

Hans estimates a range of about 180 miles with the stock tank and a couple spare cans of fuel. He’s already had it out on some long treks, such as the Hatfield McCoy trails in West Virginia. As you can see, his Northern Ohio home sees some pretty heavy snowfall, and while your daily-driver hybrid might freeze up on the way out of town, it’s just another day at the office for the RZR. Is this vehicle right for you? Only you can answer that, of course, by assessing what your surrounding area would allow in terms of a bug out. If something like this is up your alley, this is a prime example of what can be done to outfit an off-road vehicle with some hardcore kit that’d still keep it practical enough for a light, quick escape plan. **R**



1 SOLAR PANELS

MAKE: Battery Tender
MODEL: (2) 10-watt 16x24-inch
URL: www.batterytender.com

2 CAGE / FRONT STORAGE

MAKE: HMF Racing
MODEL: custom
URL: www.hmfracing.com

3 A-ARMS

MAKE: HCR Racing
URL: www.hcrracing.com

4 PISTOL

MAKE: Taurus
MODEL: Custom ceramic-coated 1911 with G10 grips
URL: www.taurususa.com

5 CAMERA/MONITOR

MAKE: Pyle
URL: www.pyleaudio.com

6 RIFLE

MAKE: Colt
MODEL: AR-15 with EOTech 557 AR223 holographic sight and G33 magnifier
URL: www.colt.com
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UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

U.S.-MADE BLADES

BY PATRICK VUONG

Not everything constructed overseas is crap.

Conversely, not everything made in the United States is golden. But, it's certainly comforting to know that your latest gear meets a certain standard that we've come to expect from products that bear the "Made in the USA" stamp. When it comes to potentially lifesaving tools (such as firearms, tourniquets, or, in this case, knives), this reliability becomes even more paramount.

Plus, as a matter of pride, it's always an added bonus knowing you're supporting a U.S. company that employs fellow Americans.

With that said, we're focusing on just a handful of the many knife companies that aren't as well known in the mainstream, but design and produce high-quality knives stateside. At RECOIL, we enjoy discovering emerging talents or shining the spotlight on hidden gems long cherished by

a select few. Unlike huge corporations that churn out knives at a blistering pace and sell them to big-box stores, these small businesses (often family owned) produce outstanding blades in far lower quantities for much higher prices. So if one of these featured knives is sold out, don't hesitate to reach out to the blade-smith. There's a good chance he's already grinding another batch right here in the good ol' U.S. of A.

1 MAKE:
Pinkerton Knives

MODEL:
Last Ditch Dart

OAL:
4.6 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
2.5 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
154CM stainless steel

WEIGHT:
1.2 ounces

MSRP:
\$50

URL:
www.dirkpinkerton.com

2 MAKE:
Kingdom Armory Knives

MODEL:
mini-Samaritan

OAL:
6.5 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
3 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
S30V stainless steel

WEIGHT:
4 ounces

MSRP:
\$385, \$400 (shown)

URL:
www.kingdomarmory.com

3 MAKE:
Bawidamann Blades

MODEL:
Hrund

OAL:
6.75 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
2.85 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
S35VN stainless steel

WEIGHT:
4 ounces

MSRP:
\$285 (shown), \$305

URL:
www.bawidamann.com

4 MAKE:
Pro-Tech Knives

MODEL:
Magic BR-1

OAL:
7.1 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
3.1 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
154CM stainless steel

WEIGHT:
3.2 ounces

MSRP:
\$300

URL:
www.protechknives.com

5 MAKE:
Red Horse Knife Works

MODEL:
Hell Razor – Frame Lock

OAL:
8.63 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
3.5 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
Chad Nichols ladder Damascus stainless steel

WEIGHT:
6.4 ounces

MSRP:
starts at \$547 (\$972 shown)

URL:
www.redhorseknifeworks.com

6 MAKE:
Spartan Blades

MODEL:
Nyx

OAL:
10 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
5.13 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
S35VN stainless steel

WEIGHT:
7.68 ounces

MSRP:
\$310

URL:
www.spartanbladesusa.com

7 MAKE:
Skallywag Tactical

MODEL:
Tactical Razor

OAL:
11.5 inches

BLADE LENGTH:
5.5 inches

BLADE MATERIAL:
S35VN stainless steel

WEIGHT:
8 ounces

MSRP:
\$395

URL:
www.skallywagtactical.com



1:1
ACTUAL SIZE

FLIP THE PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS ON EACH KNIFE.



9"

8"

7"

6"

5"

4"

3"

2"

1"

Note: Tactical Razor is 11.5 inches long



INTERROGATING THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

PINKERTON KNIVES LAST DITCH DART



411: “What is this? A knife for toddlers?” you might ask. But like most things in the self-defense world, it’s all about context. Grady Burrell of Master Proven (a retired U.S. Army master sergeant) teamed up with Pinkerton Knives to create this after friends in special-operations forces were looking for a small blade that could withstand the harshest conditions and serve as a last-ditch weapon — hence the name.

PROS:

- ▶ Ideal as a backup option that’s discreet and lightweight, but robust.
- ▶ The premium 154CM steel is easy to sharpen, holds a wicked edge, and is quite resilient.
- ▶ The grooved handle lets you wrap it with paracord for a custom fit or tie it to a stick.

CONS:

- ▶ Pass on this if you have beefy booger hooks or you’re looking for a large combat knife.
- ▶ The modified tanto-style profile is meant for piercing, so it lacks a “belly” for slicing.

KINGDOM ARMORY MINI-SAMARITAN



411: Must be something in the water — Kingdom Armory Knives is among the many knife-makers in Oregon. Its full-size custom Samaritan was shrunk down by 25 percent to produce this everyday-carry (EDC) tool that has just enough handle and plenty of blade. This titanium frame-lock folder comes with a black or an olive drab G-10 scale — for an extra \$15 you can get it with an all-titanium body. Comes with a custom soft case.

PROS:

- ▶ Titanium handle is ergonomic, lightweight, and tough as nails.
- ▶ The stonewashed S30V blade is durable, sharp, and corrosion resistant.
- ▶ Visually unique model mixes modern feel and medieval touches (i.e. textured dragon-skin pseudo-bolsters).

CONS:

- ▶ The stainless steel pocket clip flexes a bit too much for our liking.
- ▶ The right-handed frame-lock is sometimes difficult to disengage with our thumb, forcing us to close it two-handed.

BAWIDAMANN BLADES HRUND



411: Bawidamann Blades melds distinctive artistry with functional engineering to create some of the most badass edged weapons in the United States. The Hrund — named after a Valkyrie from Norse mythology — looks small until it’s unsheathed, allowing you to carry a lot of blade discreetly. While this one has a stonewashed finish, the Hrund’s also available with tungsten or bronze Cerakote for an additional \$20.

PROS:

- ▶ Bawidamann and VZ Grips co-created the G-10 scales, and they feel fantastic in hand.
- ▶ Comes with an excellent Uber Scabbard, which has adjustable retention.
- ▶ Looks like a knife befitting a Norse god.
- ▶ Blade geometry and beefiness are ideal for self-defense.

CONS:

- ▶ If you have meaty paws, your pinky won’t find any purchase on the small handle.
- ▶ Modified tanto blade profile limits its versatility for everyday tasks.

PRO-TECH KNIVES MAGIC BR-1



411: This automatic knife uses a bolster release, meaning you open and close the blade by sliding its bolster (the top part of the handle) to the right. There is no button to push or lever to press. This design makes it incredibly safe: it’s almost impossible for it to open unintentionally in your pocket, and if an unauthorized user gets hold of the knife (think child or bad guy), they won’t know how it works without prior knowledge.

PROS:

- ▶ The 154CM steel has many well-rounded properties, and its drop-point shape makes it a versatile EDC tool.
- ▶ Once you get used to the action, the bolster release is fast — and fun to boot.
- ▶ Sturdy pocket clip allows for deep carry in your pocket.

CONS:

- ▶ We’re surprised the handle is made of aluminum and not G-10 or Micarta, especially considering the \$300 price tag.
- ▶ The bolster release and pocket clip aren’t ambidextrous — sorry for being “wrong-handed,” lefties.

RED HORSE KNIFE WORKS HELL RAZOR — FRAME LOCK



411: Red Horse Knife Works modernizes the old-school straight razor with top-notch materials assembled using state-of-the-art technology. But be warned: This burly folder doesn’t come cheap. The standard model starts at \$547, and you can pay more for options (i.e. a left-handed setup). Our review sample clocks in at \$972, which gets us the Damascus steel blade and the glass breaker with lanyard hole, among other accoutrements.

PROS:

- ▶ The Damascus blade with chisel grind is extremely strong and razor sharp (pun totally intended).
- ▶ The comfy handle features a polished thumb ramp and two contoured titanium slabs.
- ▶ Every component is intricately designed and assembled.

CONS:

- ▶ The coffin-shaped titanium pocket clip is so stiff that no one among the RECOIL staff could actually get it to clip onto their pants or belt.
- ▶ Our souped-up review sample costs almost a grand, or basically the cost of an AR-15.

SPARTAN BLADES NYX



411: Spartan Blades was founded by two retired U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers who now make some of the most reliable, field-ready knives available. The Nyx is one such tool, whether you need it for combat, bushcraft, or just general utility. Named after the Greek goddess of night and darkness, this fixed blade comes in either a black or flat dark earth (FDE) SpartaCoat, while its handle is available in black or green.

PROS:

- ▶ There’s a bit of a recurve on this a drop-point blade, giving it superb slicing and chopping abilities without sacrificing thrusting power or lateral strength.
- ▶ The Micarta scales provide a firm grasp and durability.
- ▶ Stellar balance.

CONS:

- ▶ For more than 300 bucks, the knife doesn’t come with a sheath — that’ll cost you extra: \$20 for a black or FDE nylon sheath, \$25 for a MultiCam nylon sheath, or \$50 for a Kydex sheath.

SKALLYWAG TACTICAL TAZAR



411: Skallywag Tactical is a veteran-owned, Minnesota-based company that makes knives meant for harsh environments. No fragile folders or display-case blades here. This full-tang Tactical Razor evolved from Skallywag’s Gentleman’s Razor after some overseas troops requested a less visible blade with more texture on the handle. Hold this in your hand and you’ll see why our armed forces trust their lives with it.

PROS:

- ▶ The laser-like blade is made out of premium S35VN and features a chisel grind, a thumb ramp on the spine, and a Cerakote finish (in black, FDE, or olive drab).
- ▶ Micarta scales are grippy, durable, and ergonomic.
- ▶ Comes with a solid Boltaron sheath.

CONS:

- ▶ At almost four bills, it’s definitely an investment.
- ▶ While great for military personnel or outdoor enthusiasts, it’s certainly not your first choice for concealed or discreet carry in urban situations.



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TURKISH DELIGHT

THE CANIK TP9SA SETS A NEW VALUE STANDARD

BY IAIN HARRISON

PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE AND STEVEN KUO

Here at RECOIL, we're often accused of only reviewing expensive kit.

Not true. We try to review *good* kit — and in most cases, there's a direct correlation between the price you pay and the quality you get. Yes, the law of diminishing returns applies, but anyone who stands at the bar and loudly proclaims that his Hi-Point is just as good as one of them there Yuropeen guns probably hasn't had that much exposure to decent hardware.

As the guy responsible for editorial direction and whose balls are on the line if anything goes wrong, I get to splurge a little on equipment that's a few steps above entry level. I figure I've paid my dues, at one time supporting a shooting habit on a \$10-an-hour construction job, and I ask your indulgence when venturing outside of the mainstream.

With that kind of background, what the hell is this low-rent Turkish pistol doing in one of Harrison's articles, you may ask?

IT'S CHEAP. AND GOOD.

OK, so no one's going to get any points for originality here. It's a striker-fired, double-stack 9mm service pistol with a polymer frame. What's different is that it offers a very competent design that's well executed and packages it with a holster, cleaning kit, mag loader, spare backstrap, two magazines, and a fitted case. All for an MSRP of \$399, meaning street prices under 350 bucks. Now that we have your attention, let's look at some of the details.

Starting topside, you get a cleanly milled, ceramic-coated slide with three dot sights and a serrated rib — nice touch. There's a loaded chamber indicator for those jurisdictions that mandate that kind of nonsense, secured by an easily accessible roll pin for those of us who don't care for an extra point of failure on our pistols. If you remove it completely or chop it off level with the breech face, it leaves an M&P-type hole at the rear of the chamber, so brass is fairly evident anyway. The extractor is large and stiffly sprung, which should result in both a long service life and contribute to reliability. We had no failures to eject or extract in the time we spent with it.



Like a Springfield XD, the Canik's striker is fully cocked after about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch of slide travel, making for a consistent and reasonably crisp trigger pull. It can be removed from the slide in a similar fashion to just about any of its competitors — there's only so many ways to skin this cat, just push in the locking tab then pry out the back plate. You can then polish the engagement surfaces to drop the pull weight by almost a pound. If you don't want to tinker with it, then the Canik's trigger pull is at least as good as a stock Glock — and with its tactile trigger reset, gets a leg up over the M&P.

Like most of the field, the Canik uses a flat, captive recoil spring and in this case seems to be set up for higher-velocity ammunition. It sits beneath a conventionally rifled barrel (we took the opportunity to shoot lead bullets through this one) that locks up in the

usual manner, directly into the ejection port — which itself is comparatively large. The overall quality of machining of the major components leaves nothing to be desired; this is certainly no off-brand, pot metal POS churned out in a garage in Ankara. According to Century Arms, this model passed a 65,000-round endurance test with the Turkish military and is manufactured by a major defense contractor that is NATO and ISO certified.

Located just forward of the rear sight is a feature that has caused a bit of controversy among those whose experience of the gun is vastly exceeded by their desire to voice an opinion. Neatly inset into the slide's top surface is a decocking button — when pressed, it allows the striker to drop without disengaging the safety plunger. Sounds innocuous enough, but it has big safety implications and

as a result may have a proportionate impact on civilian sales, especially through the big-box retailers. Remember both wincing and shaking your head at stories about dumbasses shooting themselves through the hand as they disassembled their Glocks? Smith & Wesson was so concerned about users having to pull the trigger in order to remove the slide that they came up with a less-than-elegant workaround in their M&P line. It adds to production costs and is so cumbersome that almost no one uses it once they discover that they too can achieve the same result by pulling the trigger. The Canik's system is elegantly simple and keeps the support hand away from the loud end of the gun. Pull down the large, easy-to-manipulate takedown buttons above the trigger, press the decocker, and simply run the slide off the frame.

Remove, Install and Adjust Your Sights with the MGW Sight-Pro Universal Sight Tool



MGW, manufacturer of its widely popular sight tools, now has the Ultimate Tool for the professional gunsmith, armorer, or multiple pistol gun enthusiast!

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Design And Construction

The Sight-Pro Body is machined from aircraft grade billet aluminum and hardcoat mil-spec anodized. Pusher block and thread lead screw are CNC machined from carbon steel. All support bushings and clamp screws are CNC machined from aircraft grade stainless steel. All shoes are engraved with model number for quick reference.



Available
from these
distributors:



Ameriglo.net



Brownells.com



MidwayUSA.com



TopGunSupply.com

For those of you wondering if the gun can be deactivated in a tussle for possession, rest easy. We tried several times with different people to cause it to make the gun go dead, and there's almost zero chance of it occurring — orders of magnitude less than simply being pressed out of battery.

So much for the top end, what about the frame? Molded from the usual glass-reinforced plastic, there are only the very faintest of flashing marks visible on the underside and no warping of the dust cover, unlike certain other pig-nosed polymer guns. There's aggressive checkering on both front and backstraps and a lighter texture on the grip panels, as well as a couple of relief cuts on either side for the thumb, making for a very comfortable user interface. Backstraps are replaceable, and the user has the choice of either a shallow or pronounced arch, both of which come with cutouts for a lanyard. Unlike a Glock, the backstrap is solid, so there's less chance of snagging a magazine on the magwell gap.



The magazine release catch is located in the usual place, and is large, well shielded, and checkered. It's also reversible for lefties, unlike the slide lock. Magazines are blued steel, made by MecGar to their usual high standards. Canik obviously took a sideways glance at Austria's most famous service pistol and decided that if the Teutonic offering held 17 rounds, they were going to give the customer one more. And 20-round variants are in the works.

The only other control present on the gun is the slide lock, and it was one of the few negative points we found. Although easy to both engage and disengage, shooting with an aggressive, thumbs-forward grip resulted in overriding the last round hold open. We count this as a fairly grave problem in a service pistol, as having a visual and tactile clue that you need to get more rounds into play RFN could make the difference between life and death. Fortunately, it's a problem that can be easily rectified with a 1/8-inch punch and a Dremel cutoff wheel. Just lop off the rear tab on the slide catch lever, and voilà — there's nothing left to accidentally press.

RANGE IS HOT

In order to benchmark the new handgun against established players,

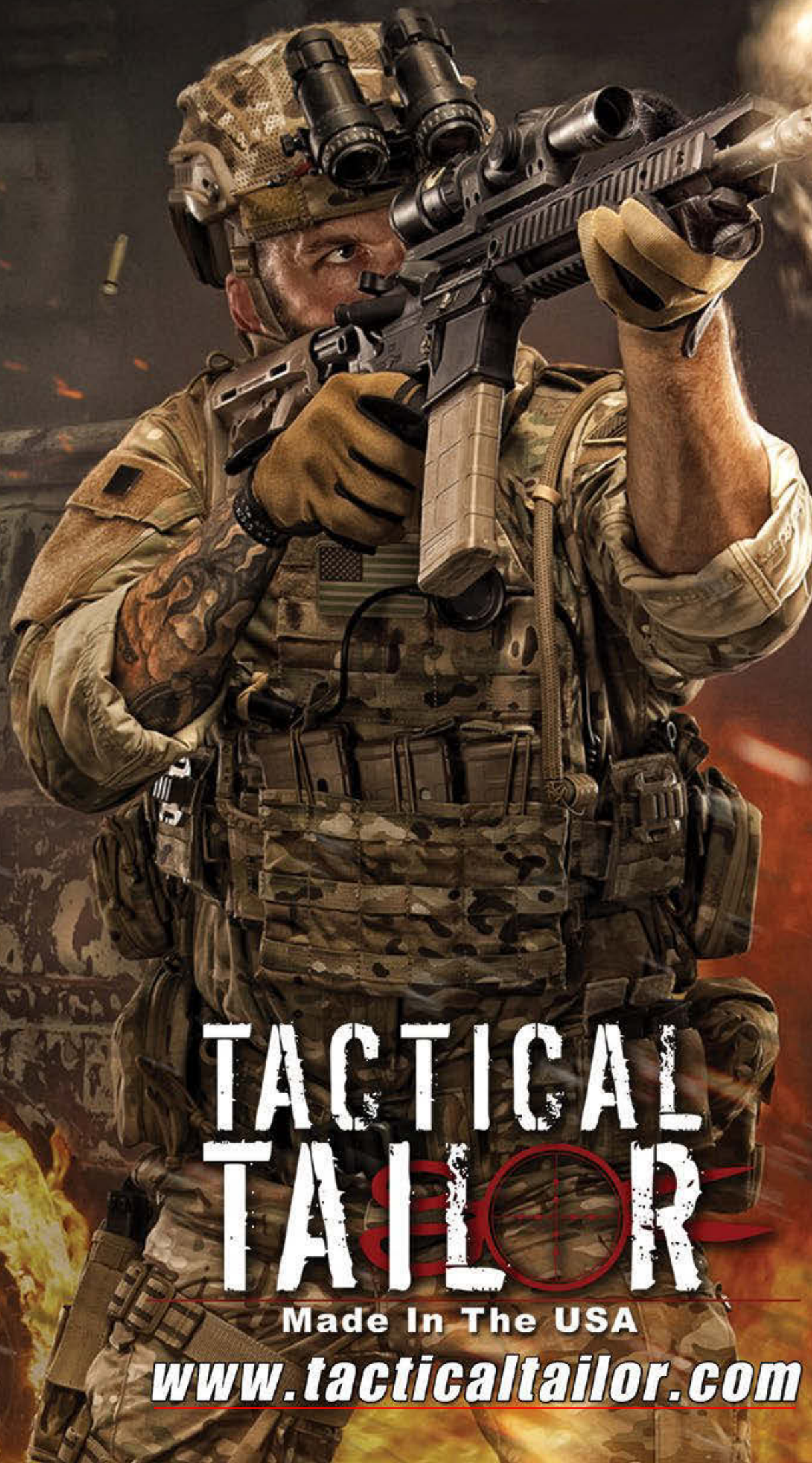
a few other plastic fantasies were shoved in the range bag. Closest in terms of look and feel was the full-size M&P, so that model provided a good basis for comparison when it came to shootability and ergonomics. The TP9SA was shot side by side against the Springfield Armory XD(M) 5.25-inch for practical accuracy tests.

All told, we shot a total of 650 rounds through the Canik. The only failures encountered were from a box of lead 115-grain reloads that had been dragged out of can of random crappy ammo, kept aside for practicing stoppage drills, and also failed at a similar rate in the other two pistols. The combination of light powder charge and short overall length caused nosedives in all three guns. Everything else, from 115- to 147-grain weights, was chewed up and spat out, though we did notice that light, range-type loads would occasionally not generate enough energy to lock the slide back on an empty mag — even after discovering the problem with the slide lock.



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Accuracy was OK. Nothing earth-shattering for sure, and the XD(M) curb-stomped the Turkish contender when it came to ringing steel at extended ranges — its tighter lockup, lighter trigger, longer sight radius, and better sights combined to make for a pretty one-sided contest. Nevertheless, we were able to get 4-inch groups at 35 yards, about on par with the M&P.

Recoil impulse was light and easily managed, aided by a low bore axis and good ergonomics. The only criticism we could level regarding the gun's ability to put rounds on target related to the sights. Although they're good quality and carved from steel, they go a little too far in terms of their quest to be low profile and snag-free. The rear sight is too short to allow the notch to be fully filled by the front sight, and as a result, part of the slide rib intrudes into the sight picture. This is both annoying and slow — a taller front sight would be a real improvement, but it would have to be coupled with a correspondingly higher rear. Despite this, the Canik's sights are still better than the ones

SPEC BOX

CANIK (IMPORTED BY CENTURY ARMS)
TP9SA

URL
www.centuryarms.com



MSRP
\$399

CALIBER
9mm Luger

BARREL LENGTH
4.4 inches

OVERALL LENGTH
7.6 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY
18 rounds

WEIGHT (EMPTY)
26 ounces

that get immediately junked on any Glock that's destined for serious use. We hear that a longslide competition model, along the lines of a G34, is in the works, so hopefully this will provide impetus for better sights which could be fitted to the service model as well. Additionally, a version chambered in .40 S&W is also planned.

It's not often that we're impressed by a low-priced gun. There are usually too many corners that have been cut

in order to get to that price point, and by the time the bean counters have finished with an original design, there's nothing worthwhile left. The TP9SA offers real value for the money, and it's going to be interesting to see how long they'll be available for less than \$400. Those of us who can recall the Croatian HS2000 probably also remember what happened to its retail price as soon as it was rebranded as the Springfield XD. Buy this one now. **R**



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HUCKIN'

IT'S A RENTAL AND WE GOT THE INSURANCE

BY IAIN HARRISON
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

Loud, fast, dangerous, and your mom probably wouldn't approve. There's always been a very strong connection between performance vehicles and guns, and anyone who says otherwise is probably mumbling apologetically through a mouthful of quiche. If you've ever watched the movie *Dust to Glory* and fantasized about hurling yourself down the length of the Baja peninsula at insane velocities, then you may want to add a little extra time to your next Vegas vacation. While your traveling companions are absorbed by the Borg-like slot machines, breathing recycled air, and having their body clocks screwed up by 24/7 lighting and cheap booze, you could

be throwing someone else's truck over 40 foot berms in the desert. Sound appealing? We thought so.

This being Las Vegas, there's no shortage of opportunities to become separated from your money. Quite apart from hookers and blow, and the prospect of waking up in a bath filled with ice-water while lamenting the loss of a kidney, it's ridiculously easy to piss away a couple of grand over a weekend and have absolutely nothing to show for it — apart from a raging hangover and a suspicious rash. We're of the opinion that if we're going to drop that sort of coin, there should at least be a memorable experience as a receipt. Enter VORE.



TRUCKS





Vegas Off Road Experience started out in 2009 with one truck and an idea. Since then, they've grown to become the official Ford Raptor driving school, added 10 more trophy trucks to their stable, and offer everything from a two-hour thrash around a dirt track to fully supported race teams for those who want to fly in, pick up the keys, and pit themselves against the likes of Robby Gordon.

After signing the obligatory waiver and promising not to sue in the event of dismemberment, we were kitted out with a helmet liner and full face lid, then strolled out to the waiting truck with pro driver Jason Smith. Strapping into the five-point harness, the engine fired up, then settled into a low burble as the truck inched forward out of the parking lot. Checking the gauges, we noted the motor was almost at operating temperature. Time to hoon.

The usual procedure is for clients to play follow the leader for the first few laps, with a VORE staffer piloting a Raptor and students tagging along in trophy trucks like obedient ducklings. Once lines have been learned and track etiquette reinforced, clients are then free to experiment and the once-orderly procession expands and compresses as students experiment with their own personal "Oh shit!" limits. "It takes a while for people to get comfortable launching over a blind crest," commented Smith over the intercom. "I raced dirt bikes for years, and it still

took me a month to get used to driving trophy trucks." Yeah, no kidding...

As we approached the first jump and launched a thousand pounds of metal and rubber into the void, the seconds between takeoff and landing were filled with memories of a busted T10 vertebra and the sure and certain knowledge that this was going to hurt. Basing that anticipation on street vehicles was a mistake, however, as 24 inches of suspension travel turned the expected body slam into a gentle shove from the seat. Great! Let's go faster!



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King

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EXHAUST:

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- › PCI Race radio system with intercom

Cornering is another technique that needs practice to relearn. Brake right, steer left, give it some gas to kick the back end out, then countersteer through the exit. Sounds simple enough, but there's usually a lot of wheel twiddling involved as

the suspension loads up. Body roll is, shall we say, pronounced, so if you've done any track days on asphalt, you may start out further behind the curve than someone who just walks in off the street.

In addition to time on their track, VORE offers the chance to take lessons learned in a controlled environment out into the desert. We recommend that if you're going to commit to a few hours at their facility, you may as well sign up for a half day (or the whole enchilada) to get the most from the experience. Expensive? Yeah, kinda, but at least you'll have memories, video, and photos of your time in Vegas, as well as a hole in your bank account, instead of just an overdraft and the faint aroma of strippers. Prices range from \$295 for five laps around the track to \$1,300 for a full day of bouncing off the rev limiter, with shuttle service from your hotel in their tricked out Transit van included. **R**

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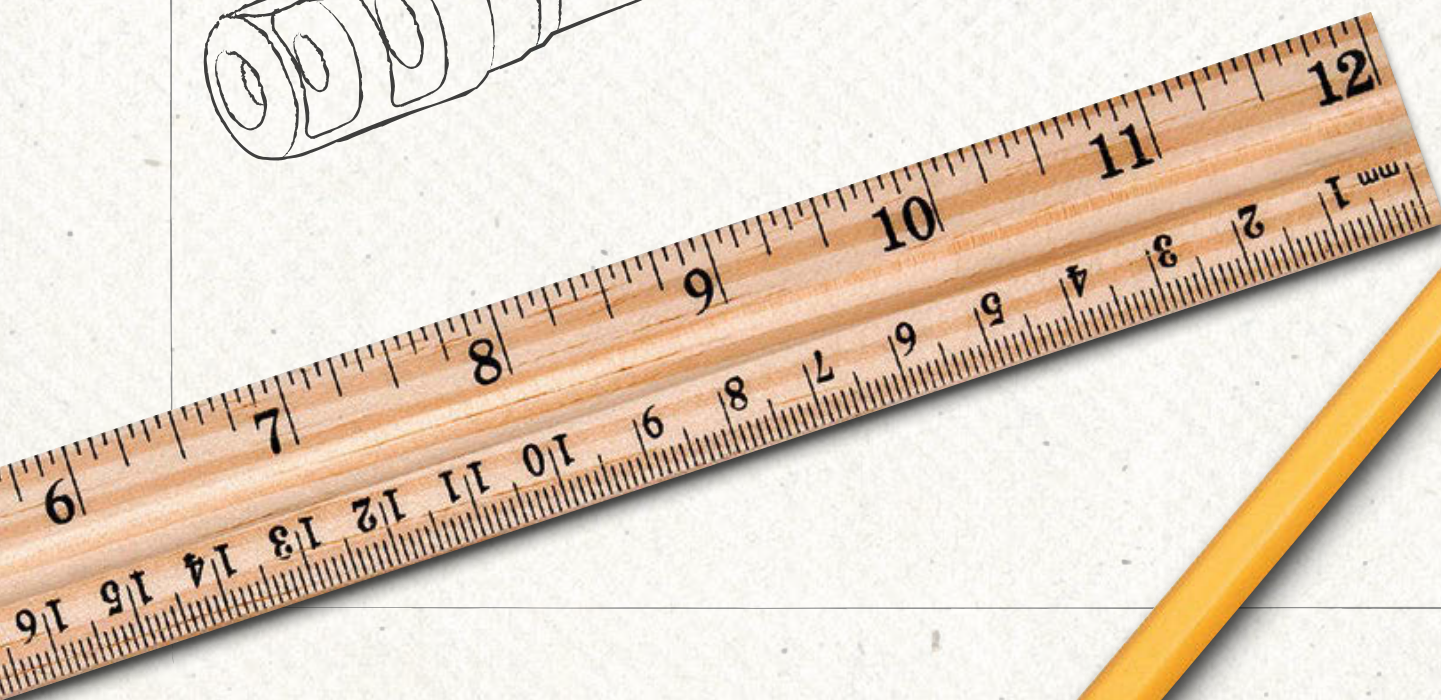


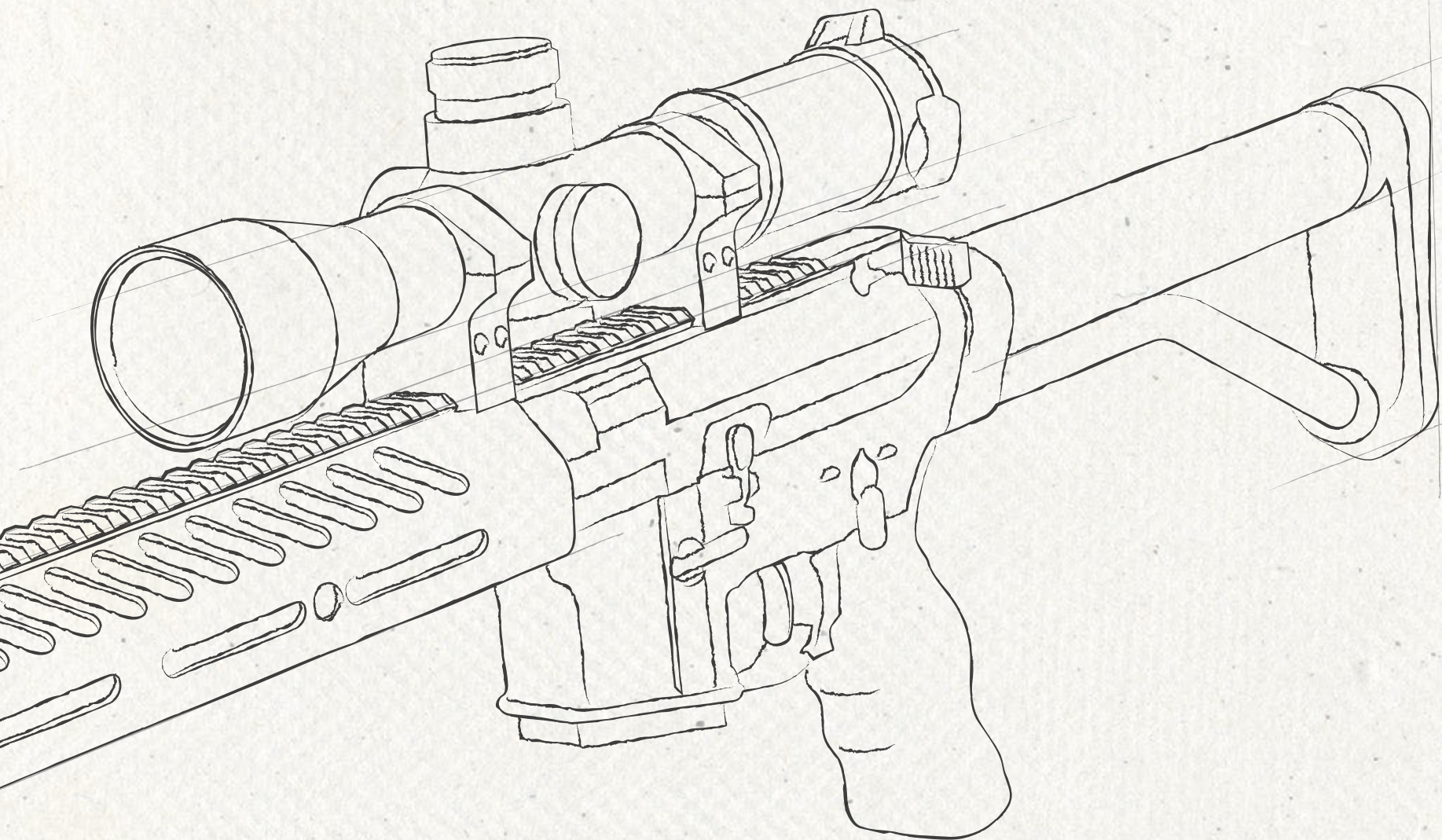
THE

1,000-

YEAR

AR-15





GOING THE DISTANCE WITH A 6MM MOUSEGUN

BY IAIN HARRISON

PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

After six decades of development, it's safe to say that the AR-15 is one of the most tinkered-with firearms designs ever. It's available in more flavors than can be found in a supermarket soup aisle, but due to Stoner's original being developed around the .223 Remington cartridge, there are very clear limits as to how far the recipe can be pushed. The key parameters are those of magazine length and width, and bolt head diameter — go outside of these boundaries and you wind up with either a single-shot rifle or a face full of steel and brass.

The armed forces are not going to give up the 5.56mm round any time soon; despite its shortcomings in range and lethality, there's an entire logistics chain built around it. As they say, amateurs talk tactics, and professionals talk logistics — and the .22 caliber is good enough for most tasks to resist any siren calls for its replacement. Civilians don't have to put up with "good enough," though. As shooters, we benefit from a cottage industry composed of smart, talented people who A) don't have to conform to Big Green's procurement protocols, and B) are driven to

build a better mousetrap.

So what does a shooter do when he's dissatisfied with the .223's ballistics? Say we want to effectively engage targets out past 1,000 yards with an AR-15; what options are available? Well, the first is to handload the .223 and boost its performance a little. In doing so, our goal should be to keep our bullet flying at supersonic velocities for as long as conditions allow (see sidebar). The formula for stretching the envelope is no secret; just launch the sleekest bullet available at the highest velocity possible.



► BUILD LIST

Because the goal of this build was accuracy at 1,000 yards and beyond, we picked quality components for the upper.

UPPER RECEIVER: Seekins Precision IRMT-3 / \$299

RAIL SYSTEM: Seekins SP3R 12-inch / \$225

BOLT CARRIER GROUP: Rubber City Armory 6.8 SPC / \$200

CHARGING HANDLE: Strike Industries ARCH-EL / \$30

BARREL: Bartlein 22-inch 5R, chambered and profiled by Keystone Accuracy / \$550

GAS BLOCK: SLR Rifleworks Sentry 7 Adjustable / \$119

MUZZLE BRAKE: Badger Ordnance Micro / \$100

SCOPE: Leupold Mark 6 3-18x44mm (H58 reticle) / \$3,250

RINGS: Talley 34mm Tactical / \$211

TOTAL COST: \$4,984

Compared to, say, a 55-grain M193 bullet, heavyweights from Nosler, Berger, and Barnes (among others) boast very high ballistic coefficients (BC), meaning that although they start out slower, they lose velocity less quickly than lightweight projectiles. Unfortunately, the very characteristic that makes them fly so sweetly (i.e., their length) also means we quickly run into problems when we try to stuff them into a magazine. They either take up room in the case that could be used for powder, thus limiting their muzzle velocity, or else they stick out so far that they have to be loaded one at a time. Although the latter strategy works well for NRA High Power shooters, most of us prefer to use that awfully convenient spring-loaded box to feed fresh rounds whenever we press the trigger.

While it's just about possible to get a .223 to reach the magic (or arbitrary and meaningless, depending on your point of view) 1,000-yard line, it's very difficult to achieve with rounds that

fit into a magazine, especially at sea level or lower temperatures. Even if everything goes as planned, the bullet arrives with so little energy remaining that it has a tough time doing much damage. And we want damage.

THROWING TOMAHAWKS

We also wanted to stick with the AR-15, so stepping up to the bigger AR-10 and its wide array of longer, fatter cartridges was a non-starter. Looking at the commercially available offerings, the most successful long-range round is the 6.5mm Grendel. While we're big fans of the 6.8 SPC, it doesn't offer a high enough BC to make it a viable 1,000-yard cartridge, with the slickest bullets available in this loading (the 115-grain versions) hitting the transonic mark only halfway there. And .300 Blackout aficionados, get back in your box.

Were we rational, objective human beings, then the most logical thing to do would be to call up Alexander Arms, have them ship us one of their 6.5mm



GLOSSARY OF TERMS



uppers and call it a day. But we're not, so we didn't. And here's why.

Despite having proven itself in the 10 years since its introduction, Bill Alexander himself would be the first to admit that his brainchild is running at the ragged edge of the AR-15's bolt geometry. Sheared lugs are a much more common occurrence than in .223 chambered guns, so we started casting around for something that would give a bit more margin for error for those times when pressures spike, such as when the gun is dirty and hot. A smaller diameter case puts more steel in the bolt head — and while the 6.8 case head is almost the same size (.421 versus .441 inches), that 20,000 delta could make a decent cushion.

Although 6.5mm-diameter projectiles have been very successful in long-range competition, the most aerodynamic, commonly available 140-grain 6.5mm bullets are too long to use in the Grendel case, so 123-grain projectiles are the ones usually encountered. These turn in

a very respectable G1 BC of around .510, but we can exceed their performance with a lighter-weight .243 bullet, while leaving more room for powder as well as giving lower recoil. Although neither round is punishing on the shoulder, there are big advantages to being able to spot trace and strike through the scope.

WILDCATting THE AR

There are several very good, long-established 6mm wildcat (i.e. non-factory) cartridges that fit inside the AR-15 envelope. After all, shooters are an innovative crowd and started tinkering with the .223 round almost as soon as it was launched. Simply expanding the case neck to 6mm produced the 6x45mm, occasionally offered as a factory load by Black Hills. Based on the 6.8 case, the 6mm Hagar was used to good effect by Carl Bernosky to win at Camp Perry several years in a row and has the advantage of Hornady supplying factory brass (but no factory ammo) for it. Designed by John Scandale at Keystone Accuracy, the .240 Tomahawk is

Ballistic Coefficient: A measure of how air resistance affects a bullet in flight, when compared to a standard projectile. Higher numbers mean the bullet cuts through the air better, and as a result retains more of its velocity for longer. There are currently two standard projectile models in common use for modeling rifle bullet trajectories.

BTHP: Boat tail, hollow point — a match bullet typically made to exacting specs.

Fire forming: Using the action of firing a cartridge in order to expand the case to fit the chamber. This method is usually employed when making wildcat cases from standard brass, where the finished case is bigger than the original.

G1 BC: The G1 BC (ballistic coefficient) model is based on a projectile that looks like a 19th century artillery shell. Which is unsurprising when you consider that's exactly why it was created in the first place. If your rifle bullets look like, well, rifle bullets, then you might consider using the G7 BC, which actually looks like a match bullet, complete with boat model.

Trace: Bullets displace air as they fly downrange and under the right conditions, it's possible to see the "wake" that they create on their way to the target. Even if the bullet strike can't be observed, oftentimes trace is visible and this allows the shooter to correct if needed.

Wildcat: A cartridge that has not been standardized by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Association. Many popular factory cartridges start out as wildcats before being added to the catalog, e.g. .300 Blackout, .260 Rem.

currently the big kahuna with the most internal volume, so despite potential feeding problems caused by its very steep 40-degree shoulder, we ordered up a barrel and dies.

Once you stray outside of the 5.56mm lane, the support of big ammo and gun companies, along with their dedicated R&D departments, dwindles rapidly, so sticking to the holy tenets of load development is critical. If you already handload, then you're probably already aware of them, but for the potential newbie, here's the scoop.

- 1.** Treat any load you find on the Internet as highly suspect and verify from another credible source before even considering it. Couch commandos are well known for pulling load data out of their flabby arses.
- 2.** Published load data may not perform exactly the same in your firearm. Chambers are cut to different tolerances and dimensions (just ask anyone who loads for 6.8), and powder varies from lot to lot.
- 3.** Just because two bullets from different manufacturers weigh the same doesn't mean they'll give identical pressures.
- 4.** When developing loads, go slowly and change only one variable at a time.
- 5.** Start out 10 percent below your chosen load and work up, checking for pressure signs on your cases as you go. If you don't know what overpressure signs are, be sure your medical insurance is up to date.



In order to form cases for the .240 Tomahawk, 6.8 SPC brass is first run through the sizing die to produce a false shoulder, just south of the case neck. This allows assembly of a round for fire forming, the objective of which is to blow the case out to its final profile, ready to reload with a full powder charge. This step was accomplished with 28 grains of Accurate 2520 under a Nosler 90-grain Ballistic Tip. Normally, we don't get too wrapped up in accuracy testing at this stage, as our end goal is just to get some fully formed brass. But when the very first five-shot group came in at 0.7 MOA, we figured there might just be something to this little round.

Due to the number of steps involved in making them, empty cases are precious — so a case catcher was used to avoid having to search the crevices of our range bag. Tumbling and processing gave shiny, new-looking hulls that we then used to work up high-accuracy loads with IMR 8208 XBR powder and Hornady 105-grain BTHPs. Settling on a final recipe of CCI small rifle primers, 28 grains of 8208, and an overall length of 2.275 inches, we saddled up the Bronco and rolled out to Cowtown's west range for a date with some distant steel. The observant among y'all will have noticed that OAL is longer than the good book would have us believe is the maximum for the .223. Using stainless steel magazines

allows us to cheat the bullet out a little more than usual — and every thousandth of an inch counts when case volume is at a premium.

Dialing in on the 300-yard line, spotter and shooter worked their way out through the 500-, 600-, 750-, and 850-yard torso-sized gongs. At each distance it was possible to see both a vapor trail and impacts through the scope, making instant corrections via the Leupold's Horus reticle as the DOPE (data on previous engagements) book gained its first entries. Deciding to go for broke, we picked out an empty 25-pound propane tank on a far hill and called for the spotter to range it. Verifying his call with a Bushnell ARC 1 Mile rangefinder, the triggerman came up 13 mils and held slightly left for wind. With the first round impacting a hair low and right, a second bullet was sent on its way after a quick adjustment.

1,180 yards downrange, a target invisible to the naked eye was perforated by tiny speck of lead and copper, packing about the same energy as a 9mm ball round. Five shooters

clustered around an iPhone that had been held up to the spotting scope and chuckled at the thought of Stoner's mousegun banging steel at almost three quarters of a mile. Everyone wanted to try their hand.

The 6mm AR-15 is a lot of work and not for everybody. If your day is constrained by work or family, or if you don't want to invest the time to learn to reload a wildcat cartridge, then we'd be the first to admit that your efforts and energies are much better spent elsewhere — a Grendel is a readymade long-range solution for the small-frame AR with plenty of factory ammunition options. But there's something about the non-existent recoil, super-efficient powder charge, and flatline trajectory of the 6mm that transcends the usual campfire caliber arguments. There are a lot of people who, for whatever reason, have elements of their identities tied up in their firearm purchases. Crunch the numbers in a ballistics calculator and make your own decisions.

We just want a better mousetrap. **R**

1:1
ACTUAL SIZE



The six steps needed to create a finished .240 Tomahawk round.
L-R, loaded 6.8SPC round, 6.8 empty case, false shoulder formed in sizing die, loaded round ready for fire forming, fire formed case, loaded .240 Tomahawk round.



THE SCIENCE-Y BIT

We want our rifle bullets to be sleek and pointy, because everything we've learned by lusting after sports cars since third grade tells us that shape is the fastest and most efficient. Unfortunately, the science of fluid dynamics says that when passing through air, the center of pressure (CP) acting on a pointed projectile is in front of its center of gravity (CG). This produces instability and means the bullet wants to flip over — great if it happens inside a meat-filled target, but less than ideal if it occurs before it actually gets there.

We counter this by using rifling to spin the bullet fast enough to resist the tendency to tumble, and different twist rates are needed in order to spin

different length bullets. As the bullet slows down and approaches the speed of sound, it enters the transonic zone — cue dramatic music — and here, things start to get a bit squirrely. The nice, predictable supersonic shockwave around the bullet tip starts to decay, and the CP shifts even farther forward. Our bullet might have left the muzzle with enough spin to keep it flying straight, but now it needs more! Even if it has enough spin to resist tumbling end over end, the forces acting on it produce a phenomenon known as precession. Think of a child's toy spinning top; as it spins, it also wobbles gently around its axis. In the case of a bullet, precession throws another variable into the mix, further

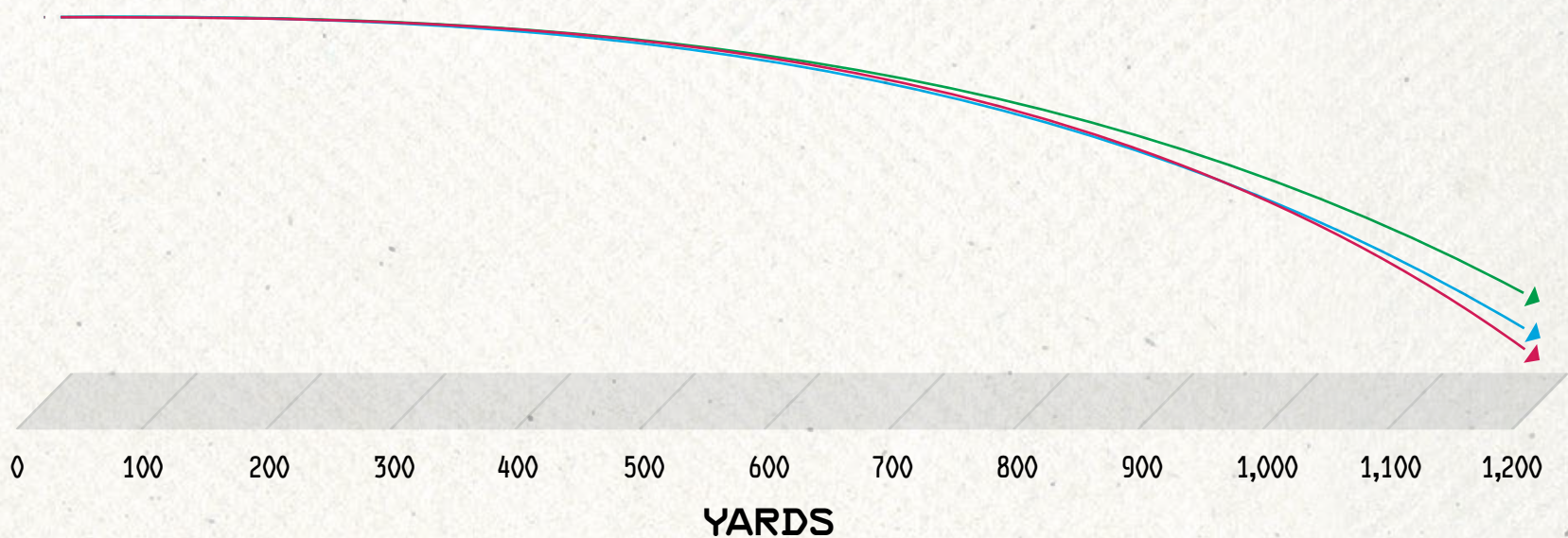
degrading accuracy while it's in the transonic zone. As the bullet becomes subsonic, precession is damped out, so long as it hasn't tumbled.

Different bullets handle the transonic zone in different ways. Some fly straight and barely notice its effects, while some become wildly inaccurate and start doing backflips. Because of the unpredictable nature of the beast, we can guarantee more consistent results if we limit ourselves to the supersonic zone which, just to make matters more difficult, varies according to air density. To be on the safe side then, we look for the maximum distance at which the bullet hits Mach 1.2, which should ensure it remains supersonic at all reasonable altitudes and weather conditions.

DROP IN INCHES

Range (yds)	.223 Rem	6.5mm Grendel	.240 Tomahawk
100	0.0	0.0	0.0
200	2.7	3.3	2.9
300	11.5	13.3	11.8
400	27.6	30.9	27.7
500	53.0	57.0	51.0
600	88.0	94.0	84.0
700	136.0	142.0	127.0
800	200.0	204.0	173.0
900	282.0	282.0	251.0
1,000	387.0	378.0	336.0
1,100	518.0	495.0	439.0
1,200	680.0	636.0	564.0

.223 Rem: 75-grain Hornady BTHP, 2,800-fps muzzle velocity; **6.5mm Grendel:** 123-grain Hornady A-Max, 2,600-fps m/v; **.240 Tomahawk:** 105-grain Hornady BTHP, 2,700-fps m/v.



(Not to scale)



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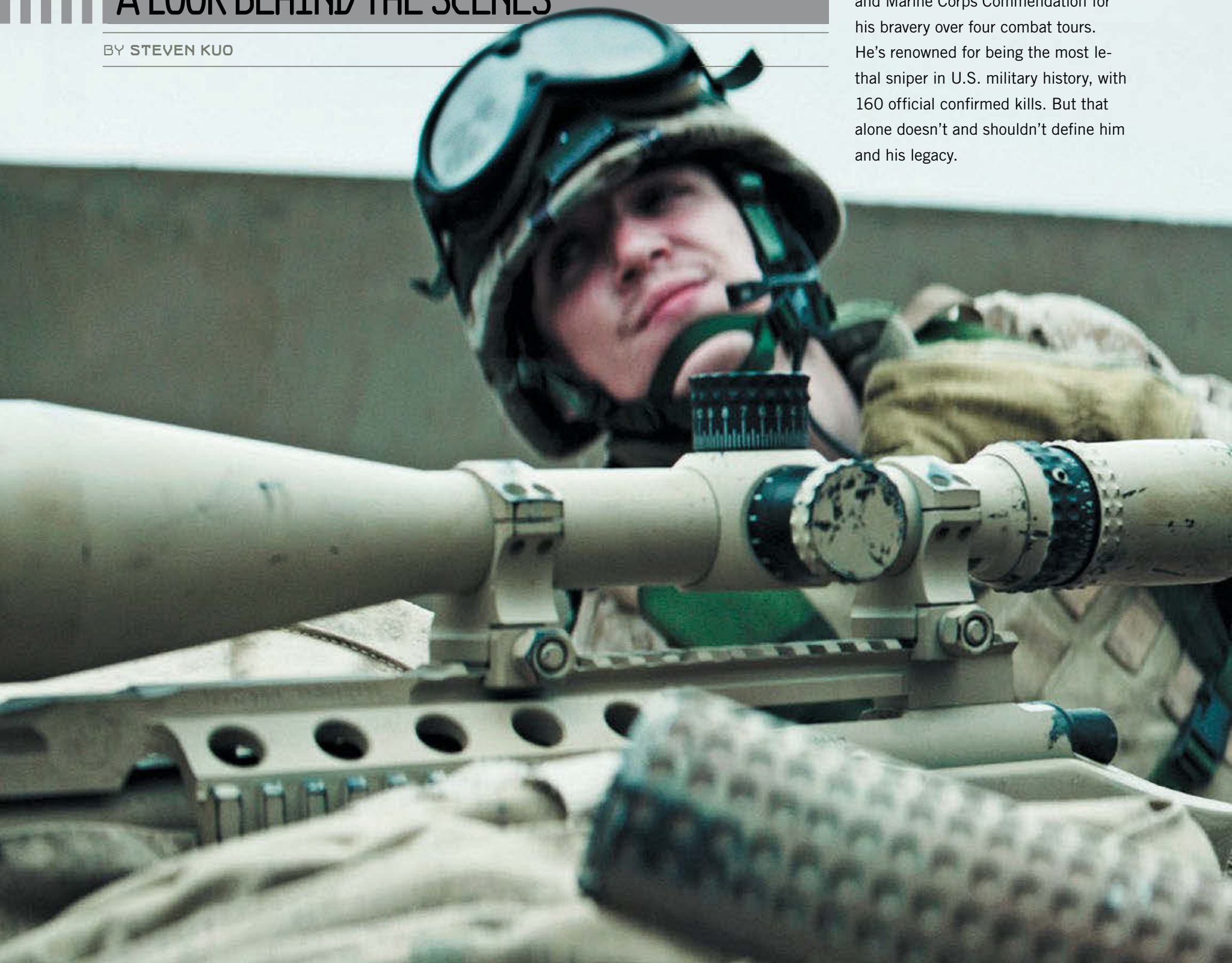
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THE GUNS OF AMERICAN SNIPER

A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES

BY STEVEN KUO

Navy SEAL Chief Chris Kyle is now a household name. He served this great country with distinction, having earned two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation for his bravery over four combat tours. He's renowned for being the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history, with 160 official confirmed kills. But that alone doesn't and shouldn't define him and his legacy.



Indeed, Oscar-winning director and all-around badass Clint Eastwood's film *American Sniper* — and actor Bradley Cooper — pay tribute to Kyle...not just for his service, dedication, and bravery, but for his and his family's sacrifices. And the film shines a bright light on the brotherhood of warriors and what all service members, veterans, and their families endure to help keep the United States strong and free.

Despite the protestations of certain misguided gelatinous mouth breathers whose names shall not defile these pages, *American Sniper* is breaking

records at the box office and racked up six Academy Award nominations and one win. The movie is clearly striking a chord with American audiences, who are responding to the story and the message. While the film takes artistic license and is clearly not entirely historically accurate, don't lose sight of the fact that this is a blockbuster movie bringing a valuable message to the masses — one that you rarely see coming out of Hollywood. We can all agree that is a good thing.

And it certainly does feel authentic, despite technical mishaps here and there in the final product. To this end,

(L-R) Kyle Gallner as Goat-Winston and Bradley Cooper as Chris Kyle in Warner Bros. Pictures' and Village Roadshow Pictures' drama *American Sniper*, distributed worldwide by Warner Bros. Pictures and in select territories by Village Roadshow Pictures. Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures.

there were scores of people behind the scenes, working tirelessly to ensure as much authenticity as possible — naturally, we're focused on those tasked with providing the distinctive weapons featured in the film.

A PEEK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Thanks to our friends at Independent Studio Services (ISS), we bring you an exclusive behind the scenes look at the guns of *American Sniper*. ISS is a full-service prop house, serving the entertainment industry for nearly four decades. One of their specialties is weapons, and they've provided guns to Eastwood and his propmaster, Mike Sexton, for numerous films over the years.

Eastwood took the helm of *American Sniper* in the fall of 2013, and soon thereafter Karl Weschta, general manager of ISS's armory, began discussing the film with Sexton. Planning for an aggressive filming schedule was already





(Left) Bradley Cooper as Chris Kyle. (Below) Sammy Sheik as Mustafa. (Bottom) Actor/producer Bradley Cooper and director/producer Clint Eastwood. Photos courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures.



underway, but all the pieces were not yet in place. Despite uncertainty as to whether the production would proceed, ISS couldn't wait to get started building guns if they had any hope of hitting deadlines (exacerbated by the need to work with the State Department to transport guns to sets in Morocco). ISS owner Gregg Bilson green-lit the investment, and they were off to the races, even without a script in hand.

Especially with Kyle's tragic death earlier that year, everyone involved was keen to get everything exactly right and do it justice. It was tricky to piece together gear in use in from almost 10 years ago. Companies and folks from throughout the industry came together to make it happen: DD Ross, Remington, Dakota Arms, McMillan, Knight's Armament Company, Leupold, Nightforce, Turner Saddlery, Black Hills Ammo, McCann Industries, Douglas Barrels, Rock Creek, Harris, HS Precision, GA Precision, FLIR, LMT, EO

Tech, James Dever, Kevin Lacz (technical advisor and fellow SEAL Team 3 member who plays Dauber in the film), and many others. The rifles are all real firearms, the suppressors are dummy units, and the pistols are firearms that have been carefully modified to fire blanks. In the preparation of this article, we also received additional input from Chief Monty LeClair, an active duty Navy SEAL with two decades in special operations and at Naval Special Warfare Command (NSW), who personally built some rifles for Kyle and who owns Centurion Arms.

Note that the specifications listed represent those for the weapons that were built for the movie. Notations are made where there was some debate or questions about original specs. There were numerous other awesome weapons featured in and built for the movie (for instance, the GA Precision Gladius rifle near the end), but unfortunately we couldn't fit them all.

EARLY MK 13 NAVY RIFLE



MAKE:

Remington

MODEL:

700 Magnum

CALIBER:

.300 Win Mag

BARREL LENGTH:

27 inches (issued Mk 13s had 26.5 inch barrels)

OVERALL LENGTH:

53 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

3 rounds (internal)

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

19.4 pounds

SPECS:

- » Sendero hybrid target barrel, custom manufactured to accommodate the unique contour and suppressor mounting requirements
- » Knight's Armament Company Mk 11 Mod 0 suppressor
- » McMillan RH A-2 Navy contract stock, 13.5-inch LOP with 1-inch Decel pad, 2-studs, sniper fill
- » Custom field-expedient cheek rest with 100-mph tape
- » McCann Industries MIRS mount
- » Dakota bottom metal (long action hinged floor plate)
- » Nightforce NXS 8-32x56mm Mil-Dot scope (early style without zero stop; note that the standard issue scope was the 5.5-22x56mm model, but Kyle was testing and using this one)
- » Nightforce Ultralite 30mm 1.265 inch scope rings contoured for rail
- » Turner National Match M1907 leather sling
- » Harris bipod

» This rifle opens the movie and is used by Kyle throughout Tour 1. With the amount

of screen time, as well as the TV and print commercials, the Mk 13 is arguably the biggest "firearm star" of the movie. At the time, the SEALs referred to this rifle as the "300 Win Mag;" the Mk 13 nomenclature came later. This was the most difficult build of the bunch — Weschta scraped together authentic parts, Don Ross of DD Ross Company built the guns, and ISS's in-house gunsmith Scott Fritschler fit the suppressors. It was challenging to find the correct MIRS rail systems of the era, and replicate the barrel contour and suppressor mounting points. The early style McCann rail was rare, and ISS had to trade an entire custom rifle build to a fellow who happened to own two of them. Note also that the scope reticle you see in the film is unfortunately not the actual Nightforce reticle provided to the production.



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MCMILLAN TAC-338 RIFLE

MAKE:

McMillan

MODEL:

TAC-338

CALIBER:

.338 Lapua Magnum

BARREL LENGTH:

26.5 inches with brake

OVERALL LENGTH:

49.625 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

5-round Accurate Mag detachable

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

16.7 pounds

SPECS:

- » McMillan G30 push-feed action
- » 3-pound trigger
- » McMillan A-5 adjustable stock
- » McCann Industries MIRS 20MOA rail
- » McMillan muzzle brake
- » Leupold Mark 4 LR/T 8.5-25x50mm M1 illuminated scope
- » Leupold scope rings
- » Turner National Match Tan sling
- » Harris Bipod

» Kyle's McMillan TAC-338 rifle figures prominently in the climactic faceoff with Mustafa in the fourth tour. It was built by McMillan Firearms, with a lot of help from Gerald Hills and Dave Arnberger, to exactly match the rifle they built for Kyle, an earlier variant of their current model. For the movie, McMillan built this gun as well as stocks for other rifles. Unlike the other rifles, it did not have a suppressor fitted. The TAC-338 was not a standard-issue weapon, and there was some debate over whether Kyle used a Leupold or Nightforce optic (both were in service with the SEAL teams). Kyle had a Leupold on the cover of his book and in his publicity shots, so that sealed the deal.



MK 11 MOD 0 RIFLE

MAKE:

Knight's Armament Company

MODEL:

SR-25 Match

CALIBER:

7.62mm

BARREL LENGTH:

20 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

45.5 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

20 rounds

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

15.9 pounds

SPECS:

- » Knight's Armament Company Mk 11 Mod 0 suppressor
- » Two-stage match trigger (4.5 pounds)
- » KAC RAS free-float handguard
- » KAC 600-meter rear flip-up iron sight
- » KAC folding front sight
- » Leupold Mark 4 LR/T 3.5-10x40mm Mil-Dot scope
- » Leupold scope rings
- » A2 buttstock
- » Turner National Match M1907 leather slings
- » Harris bipod on KAC mount

» Kyle wields the Knight's Armament Company SR-25 during the latter part of Tour 1, removing the suppressor for house clearing. Trey Knight and his team at KAC built a pair of these rifles for the movie, both with authentic Mk 11 markings (the second was used by Dauber, played by Kevin Lacz, and other troops in the film). There are reportedly approximately 100 Mk 11 rifles in civilian hands that are collector pieces, trading at tens of thousands of dollars. As a side note, ISS acquired about 60 sets of KAC rail systems to accurately depict the USMC M16s in the film.



MK 12 MOD 1 RIFLE

**MAKE:**

Colt

MODEL:

M16A2

CALIBER:

5.56mm

BARREL LENGTH:

18 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

40.125 to 43.325 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

30 rounds

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

12 pounds

SPECS:

- » Knight's Armament Company RAS free-float handguard
- » Douglas premium air-gauged stainless barrel 1/7 twist
- » Crane low-profile gas block
- » PRI gas buster charging handle
- » OPS Inc. muzzle brake and collar
- » OPS Inc. 12th model suppressor
- » Harris bipod
- » KAC folding sights
- » Leupold Mark 4 2.5-8x36mm MR/T illuminated M1 Turret scope
- » LMT SOPMOD stock
- » ARMS 22H high scope rings
- » Docter red dot sight

» Kyle uses the Mk 12 special purpose rifle (less its secondary red-dot sight) in a sniper training scene. Alan Brown, who also built rifles for NSW, and High Caliber Sales built six of them for *Lone Survivor*. It's interesting to note that NSW Crane delivered all Mk 12 rifles to the SEAL teams with rifle-length receiver extensions, typically with A1 fixed stocks. The reason is that they wouldn't run reliably in full auto with a carbine-length system. However, the end users didn't care about full auto on these rifles, so they would often retrofit them with collapsible stocks (such as the LMT SOPMOD shown here). Some would even install semi-auto selectors as well to lock out full-auto mode.



MK 18 MOD 0

**MAKE:**

Colt

MODEL:

AR-15 XM-16E (full-auto transferable lower)

CALIBER:

5.56mm

BARREL LENGTH:

10.5 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

32 to 35.25 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

30 rounds

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

9.9 pounds

SPECS:

- » LMT SOPMOD stock
- » Aimpoint M68 CCO sight and mount (note: SEAL teams typically used a Wilcox mount)
- » Knight's Armament Company M4 RIS handguard
- » KAC QDSS-NT4 suppressor
- » AN/PEQ-15
- » KAC vertical grip
- » LMT L8A fixed rear sight
- » Surefire Scout light with 7-inch pressure switch
- » CQD sling mount
- » S.O. Tech custom sling

» Kyle's trusty Mk 18 carbine is seen, carried, and used throughout the film, from the opening scene through the many CQB engagements. It later sports the distinctive Punisher paintjob, and if you look carefully you'll also notice the fine attention to detail as the laser designator graduates from an AN/PEQ-2A early on in the movie to an AN/PEQ-15 later. The build was based on a full-auto transferable Colt receiver.



M24A1 RIFLE

**MAKE:**

Remington

MODEL:

700 Long Action

CALIBER:

7.62mm

BARREL LENGTH:

24 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

43.625 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

5-round internal magazine

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

14.5 pounds

SPECS:

- » 5R Rock Creek M24 contour stainless steel barrel
- » HS Precision stock with adjustable length of pull and hinged floor plate
- » Leupold Mark 4 LR/T 3.5-10x40mm scope
- » Leupold scope rings
- » Dakota Arms M24 trigger guard
- » Harris bipod



» This example of a US Army M24 fills the screen in the hands of a Special Forces operator on the rooftop in the last battle scene. It was built by ISS gunsmith Scott Fritschler to replicate the issued weapons.

M40A3 RIFLE

**MAKE:**

Remington

MODEL:

700 Short Action

CALIBER:

7.62mm

BARREL LENGTH:

24 inch

OVERALL LENGTH:

45.625 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

5 rounds (internal)

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

17.6 pounds

SPECS:

- » Douglas #7 MC contract barrel
- » DD Ross trigger guard
- » McMillan A4 stock
- » DD Ross 30 MOA rail
- » Schmidt & Bender M8541 3-12x50mm scope
- » Badger Ordnance scope rings
- » Harris bipod

» M40A3 rifles are utilized by Marine scout snipers in the movie, topped with Unertl 10x scopes in early scenes (production had one real and one dummy unit) and Schmidt & Bender M8541 scopes in later scenes. These rifles were built to issue specs using contract parts by Dan Ross. During Kyle's training scenes, you see him behind an M40A1, which was actually a painted Model 700 PSS.



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- Chambered in 5.56mm NATO
- 18" match-grade, hammer-forged, chrome-lined, free-floated barrel
- Timney 3.5 lb competition trigger
- SureFire ProComp 556 muzzle brake
- Midwest Industries SSM M-LOK™ 15" rail
- Rifle-length gas system with H1 buffer
- Magpul STR® stock, grip, and MBUS® Pro sights



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DISTINCT ADVANTAGE™

CHINESE DRAGUNOV

**MAKE:**

Chinese

MODEL:

NDM-86

CALIBER:

7.62x54mm

BARREL LENGTH:

24 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

47.875 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

10 rounds

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

9.4 pounds

SPECS:

» POSP 4x24 scope

» AK-style side rail scope mount

» This Chinese Dragunov was used by the enemy sniper, Mustafa, in the final battle. Sharp-eyed viewers will note Mustafa used Romanian PSL/FPK sniper rifles in earlier scenes, which were filmed in Morocco. The Chinese Dragunov could not be sent out of country, and was used in scenes filmed stateside. Note also that Two Rivers Arms built Iraqi Tabuk sniper rifles that were found in the arms cache in the movie.



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY 1911 TRP OPERATOR

**MAKE:**

Springfield Armory

MODEL:

1911 TRP Operator

CALIBER:

.45 ACP

BARREL LENGTH:

5 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

8.625 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

7 rounds

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

2.6 pounds

» While a SIG SAUER P226 would have been standard issue, Kyle wrote about his preference for .45 ACP and that he carried a Springfield Armory 1911 TRP Operator. In the movie, Kyle's carrying it in a thigh rig during the first tour.

SIG SAUER P220

**MAKE:**

SIG SAUER

MODEL:

P220

CALIBER:

.45 ACP

BARREL LENGTH:

4.4 inches

OVERALL LENGTH:

7.75 inches

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

8 rounds

WEIGHT UNLOADED:

1.71 pounds

» Kyle wrote about switching to a SIG SAUER P220 after having some problems with his 1911. This is reflected in the movie, as his sidearm in Tours 2 and beyond is this P220, in a belt holster.



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BLACK RIFLES THAT BLEED RED

||||| A PAIR OF ARs FOR AK LOVERS

BY TOM MARSHALL
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

ISSUE 18

72

RECOILWEB.COM





The AR versus the AK. Just seeing that phrase conjures images of 1,000-page-long forum threads and backyard YouTube videos, as each party tries to prove why their chosen rifle is the one gun to rule them all. Luckily for us, and despite what your elected officials may try to tell you, America is still a nation of compromise. For those die-hard AR fans who are willing to try a mile in the other guy's shoes, two companies now offer black rifles that not only fire the 7.62x39mm cartridge, but run it out of traditional AK-pattern magazines. Before we get down to the brass tacks, it's worth considering one question...why?

"Because." In our opinion, this is a perfectly legitimate answer when it comes to guns. It's popular these days to demand that every new gun a company releases, or every purchase a shooter considers, be justified by a specific need or purpose. If the product can't be assigned to a deliberate task, it's somehow less legitimate. But just like big trucks, fast cars, and old wine, sometimes we want it just because it's new, old, rare, or just plain interesting. If one person is willing to sell it and another is willing to buy it, why get wrapped up in the details? God bless the free-market economy.

All soapbox grandstanding aside, an AR that fires a Russian round out of Russian magazines does offer some unique practical advantages. The AK-47 — and its magazines — are widely popular in many of the regions where American and Allied forces are currently engaged. An AR-pattern rifle, on which many NATO soldiers are already trained up, that can be fed local ammo from magazines picked up off the battlefield has some promise. Especially when one considers that AR-pattern magazines adapted to the Commie cartridge almost universally suck to one degree or another.



Note size and placement of magazine catches on the Rock River Arms (left) and the CMMG (right). The Mutant's is considerably easier to operate.

For those who hunt with ARs, the 7.62x39mm offers some ballistic advantage over the 5.56mm. Despite a somewhat lazy trajectory and exaggerated bullet drop, it delivers more energy and better penetration on medium game at shorter distances. In a defensive rifle, these same properties give the 7.62x39mm an advantage against intermediate barriers. For competitors and plinkers, AK ammo is almost always cheaper and just as widely available as the 5.56mm, allowing more aggressive training and practice regimens.

Whatever your want or need, there are two currently available options from two respected companies. We lined up samples from both to evaluate the pros and cons of each rifle.

THE VETERAN

Rock River Arms released their LAR-47 about two years ago. It was not the

first 7.62x39mm AR-style rifle. But, to our knowledge, all previous iterations relied on proprietary AR-15-style magazines that had been resized for the shorter, thicker, and tapered case. The normally shallow curve of Stoner's G.I. magazine had to be steepened unnaturally. They functioned — just barely — but were as reliable as your deadbeat brother-in-law. Also, these magazines were (and are) tough to come by and more expensive when you could get them.

Rock River skirted the feeding problem by housing the ammunition in its natural habitat — and instead redesigning the rifle around the mags. While we don't know what kind of sales success the LAR-47 has had to date, we haven't seen or heard anything poor written about them. It has sat comfortably for the last two years as a sort of only-in-class product offering niche capability with no direct competition. Until now.

THE CONTENDER

At the time of writing, the CMMG Mk47 Mutant is less than three weeks old on the open market. CMMG clearly took its time, watching the competition mature in the market for at least two years and, we assume, carefully considering what unique suite of features they would offer on their own model, and no doubt making some last-minute changes prior to launch. The Mutant's features are in keeping with current trends in the AR community. The forearm is KeyMod, running to the muzzle, and is topped with a compensator as opposed to an A2 birdcage. The furniture is from Magpul, and the top rail is continuous from receiver to forearm. The Mk47 would not look out of place in a three-gun cart or dressed with a bipod and glass.

INTO THE BREACH

Rather than go into this faceoff with a set of parameters or a checklist



to run down with each weapon, we decided, this time, we'd just shoot the guns and see how they felt. We ran (or tried to run) each rifle with four different magazines, four different kinds of ammunition, and two different optics.

The magazines were one each of the following: US PALM, PMAG, RRA factory, and a steel surplus mag of indeterminate provenance from some godless heathen nation.

Ammo consisted of Wolf Poly 124-grain FMJ, Silver Bear Match 122-grain FMJ, Federal 122-grain JSP, and Red Army Elite 122-grain FMJ.

The optics were an EOTech 558.A65 and a Hi-Lux CMR-AK762 1-4x. Without making this a scope review, it's worth saying something about the Hi-Lux before we go any further. Hi-Lux has been around for a long time, but never really been on this gunner's radar. We're publicly admitting right now that this was a mistake. While a lot of

people turn their nose up at gear made overseas, if you want to run magnified glass on an AK-type rifle, the Hi-Lux CMR would be an excellent choice. The BDC reticle is illuminated and pre-set for the 7.62x39mm's trajectory. The turret clicks are loud, positive, and tool-less. Optical clarity is impressive — the picture is bright and the colors are true. If you purchase either of the rifles in this review, or any other 7.62x39mm platform, the CMR-AK will serve you well in a variety of roles.

We started with the Mk47 Mutant. One of the first things to strike the

shooter about this weapon right out of the box is how heavy it feels. It may be a combination of barrel profile and the longer handguard, but firing this weapon from the shoulder was not particularly enjoyable. All magazines locked in place and fed well. The RRA factory mag and the surplus steel mag both had some very mild play in the magwell, front to back, and laterally. The PMAG and US PALM locked up tight, with no play at all. Considering that AK mags vary widely in their tolerances, it seems that CMMG found a happy medium when it dimensioned the magwell.

The affordable (\$459) Hi-Lux scope proved to be an ideal partner to the x39 round.





We also really like the design of its magazine release, an improved version of the traditional AK paddle. The paddle is flared on both sides so it can be hit by either trigger finger. It can also be run by the thumb or leading edge of a fresh mag, as the current AK manual-of-arms would dictate. All ammunition fed and grouped about 2 MOA. We experienced one malfunction in the first magazine fired — a brass-over-bolt that required the shooter to collapse the stock and mortar the weapon to clear it. Neither gun was lubricated prior to testing and, after clearing this jam, we did not experience any other malfunctions with the CMMG.

The compensator up front and rubber padded Magpul stock in the back made the 7.62's recoil a non-issue. What was an issue was the Mutant's trigger. If your metric is a stock AR trigger, then it's not atrocious. But were we going to put one of these in our safe, a new trigger would be mandatory. The break was crisp...when we eventually found it. But there was a ton of stacking, and it was hardly consistent. On the range, we spent long pauses waiting for the break and the

grouping exercise was a fairly intensive study in trigger prep.

The Rock River features a 7-inch quad rail with exposed gas block — a pet peeve of ours, but no effect on function. It's not quite as easy on the hands as a KeyMod piece, but its shorter length definitely gave the LAR-47 a better sense of balance. The furniture is Rock River OEM. The LAR magwell is cut on a steep slant, creating a sort of natural funnel and loads and unloads were noticeably quicker than with the CMMG. Unfortunately, this limits your magazine selection. The RRA factory mag seated perfectly, as did the surplus steel mag. The US PALM magazine would not seat at all. The PMAG seated, but would double-feed every time we tried to chamber a round.

After several stoppages, we finally broke down, lubricated the LAR-47 and tried the PMAG again with the same result. After several attempts, the Magpul mag was benched for the remainder of the LAR-47's testing. In contrast to the Mutant, the LAR-47's

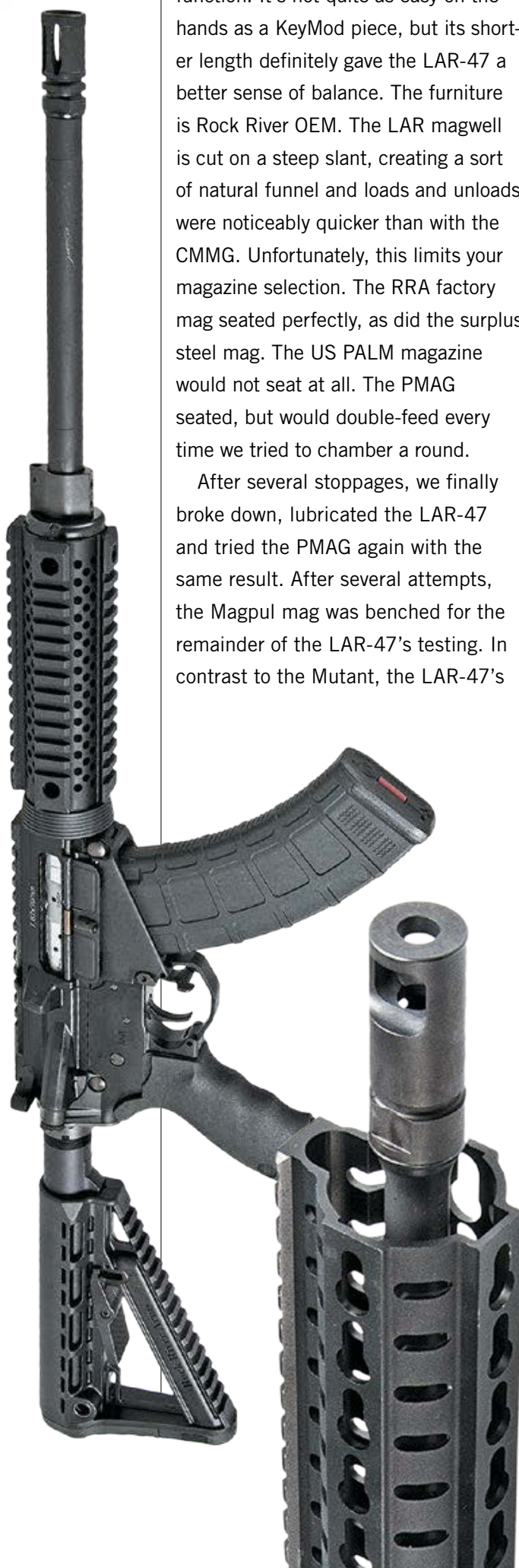
magazine release is an upside down T-shaped paddle located inside the trigger guard. In theory, this makes for easy access by either trigger finger. In practice, the latch on our test gun was so stiff that it made trigger fingers sore after just a few mag changes, and we wound up just using the support-side thumb, using a fresh mag to dump the empty is impossible due to the design.

The trigger is a two-stage Rock River National Match trigger — quite possibly the nicest off-the-shelf trigger we've experienced on an AR. The slack is easy to manage and stops dead against a solid wall, breaking crisply and resetting quickly every single time. We hoped that this would result in tighter groups but, alas, 2 MOA was still about the best we could manage, though those results were substantially easier to achieve with the RRA match trigger than the CMMG. The barrel is topped with an A2-style flash hider, which seemed to have no effect one way or the other on recoil. The Rock River's BCG is hard chromed, making cleanup a little easier. No malfunctions of any kind were experienced while shooting the LAR-47.

SURVEY SAYS...

It's safe to say that neither one of these rifles came through unscathed. Both are going to require some compromises on your part, depending on personal preference.

If I had to take one home today, it would be the LAR-47 hands down. Magazine choices and rail space would be limited. I would also have to train on my reload technique a little harder, but the Rock River's quick handling and easy trigger meet the prime directives for any serious-use carbine. Of course, you should buy the rifle that fits you best, not this writer. And either choice will give you a modular, hard-hitting rifle that can satisfy shooters on both sides of the Iron Curtain. **R**





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SECOND OPINION BY IAIN HARRISON

It's not unusual for two shooters to have different outlooks on guns. Admit it, how many times have you and a buddy engaged in chest-thumping over your firearm choices? Without wishing to turn this into a participation ribbon event where no one's feelings get hurt, it always pays to have a different perspective — while Tom spends his work days at the blunt end of an M4 in hot, miserable conditions, this shooter gets to play with guns in a somewhat more civilized environment. Which is why we came to a different conclusion.

Yeah, the Mk47's trigger won't win any prizes, but the guys at CMMG have made sure their creation will last just about forever by designing it around a cut-down AR-10 bolt.

The 5.56mm bolt head has major problems when it's opened up to handle the 7.62x39mm cartridge, which is why we went with a 6.8 SPC case as the basis for our 1,000-yard AR-15 on page 54. By going large, they've put more metal where it counts. We also like the extended handguard, as it fits our shooting style and allows for more options when shooting around or over barricades, as well as being more comfortable in the hand.

It's interesting to note that in both cases, the guns turned in similar groups of around 2 MOA, which is pretty decent performance for non-match type carbines and lays to rest the idea that the 7.62x39mm round is inherently inaccurate.



SPEC BOX

ROCK RIVER ARMS LAR-47 DELTA CARBINE



URL
www.rockriverarms.com



ACCESSORIES
EOTech 558.A65 \$630
Magpul PMAG 30 AK/AKM \$30



MSRP
\$1,545



PRICE AS FEATURED
\$2,205



CALIBER
7.62x39mm



BARREL LENGTH
16 inches



OVERALL LENGTH
33 inches



WEIGHT (EMPTY)
6.9 pounds



MAGAZINE CAPACITY
30

SPEC BOX

CMMG MK47 MUTANT AKM



URL
www.cmmginc.com



ACCESSORIES
EOTech 558.A65 \$630
Magpul PMAG 30 AK/AKM \$30



MSRP
\$1,650



PRICE AS FEATURED
\$2,310



CALIBER
7.62x39mm



BARREL LENGTH
16.1 inches



OVERALL LENGTH
33.5 inches



WEIGHT (EMPTY)
7.2 pounds



MAGAZINE CAPACITY
30

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MARK OWEN

THE FORMER SEAL TALKS ABOUT
TIME IN DEVGRU AND THE
TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

BY JASON DAVIS
PHOTOS BY JAKE SWANSON

The beginning of the New Year starts off differently for many folks. Some make resolutions, perhaps some find a higher meaning to life, and some may just treat the New Year as the start of another month. If you are in the firearms, outdoor, hunting, or shooting industry you finalize your plans to attend the Shooting, Hunting, Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show in Las Vegas. It's a Mecca of sorts in Sin City that brings many parts of the industry together under one roof, and the people who attend usually look for the newest unveilings from their favorite companies.

Meetings from sun-up to sun-down and beyond are the norm, with people scurrying from meeting to meeting. A lot of business is conducted at this show — introductions are made that can last a lifetime, and eyes are opened to things previously unseen. SHOT 2015 was no different, but one meeting warranted a little more preparation than the others. We took the opportunity to sit down with Mark Owen, the pseudonym of the author of *No Easy Day* and the recently released *No Hero*, currently on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

Perhaps a fair number of you have seen his interviews on *60 Minutes* or read one or both of his books. Upon sitting down with Mark, you soon realize he's a very easy person to talk to, with no time for BS. He likes to laugh and is genuine with his conviction and words. There's a very perceptible level of intensity too, as you'd expect from a man driven to excel at everything he's done, from his childhood in the backwoods of Alaska to charging up the stairs in bin Laden's Abbottabad compound.

Speaking with Mark about his time leading up to joining the Navy gives you the sense that he enjoys talking about his enlistment — perhaps trying to convey to others who may hear or read his words that they might find the drive within themselves to take the steps he took and never give up on their hopes and dreams. Entering the United States Navy to

become a SEAL is a dream shared by many, but realized by few. The training that candidates go through while attending the Basic Underwater Demolition/Seal (BUD/S) course is brutal, cold, and miserable, challenging all who take their first step onto the Navy base in Coronado, California.

After five years, Mark made selection for the fabled SEAL Team 6, also known as DEVGRU. Stress and pressure seemed to be the norm back at Dam Neck, the Fleet Training Center in Virginia Beach — a perfect environment to bring out the best in Mark. If he made a mistake during training, he was not only disappointed in himself, but that he had let the instructors down. The instructors would look at you like your dad might if you had disappointed him while growing up.

Entering Dam Neck as an E-5, Mark did not make his first promotion to Chief, but succeeded the second time around. During his time at DEVGRU, he was promoted three times and left the US Navy as an E-8. With rank came more responsibilities, and moving up to the team leader position was something that he enjoyed. Working with a group of guys who were all senior personnel seemed to make it more manageable, as they were all at the Command for one fight.

Of the different jobs he held while at Dam Neck, the one that he liked the best was as the “gear guy.” Always working to maintain his own personal kit and finding the best gear he could, Mark was one of the go-to guys when it came to ordering gear for his teammates. Whether it was selecting boots, holsters, or other gear for a deployment, Mark would compile a list for gear and his teammates would pick a size and complete their orders based on his selections. Being the gear guy, Mark always wanted to make better kit available for himself and his team — and this led him to work with a number of companies to develop improved products.

After 14 years at the tip of the spear, Mark reviewed his options with his leadership, one of which was getting out. As an E-8, he would have had one more tour as a team leader and then would have been stuck for years in an admin job or a position that would have taken him away from what he really wanted to do at DEVGRU. Not being the type of guy who would do well indoors, this weighed heavily on his decision to leave the Navy. He looked at his enlistment commitment — riding out another six years for a total of 20. After weighing it all, he made the decision that year 14 would be a good end cap to what he had accomplished. After a career where he had decisions made for him and lived by the decisions of others, he made his own to leave for good.

Working at the level he did for so long, with the caliber of his teammates, the immense training they had — Mark was living at the pinnacle of the U.S. Military machine and wondered what would be the next step in his life and how he



might reinvent himself. A résumé full of specialized training that most of us will only read about provides access to quite a few specialized arenas on the outside, but he didn't want to do anything similar to the past 14 years.

Mark is now well known for his bestselling book, *No Easy Day*, which chronicles his years as a SEAL and, in particular, his account of Operation Neptune Spear on May 1, 2011. A team leader on the mission, Mark was one of the first through the door on the third floor of bin Laden's compound and witnessed his last moments. To write the book, Mark worked with his co-writer Kevin Maurer. Mark told stories to Kevin, conveying some of what he wanted to present, but Kevin would ask questions about being on the ground, the sights, the smells, feelings or accomplishments. Mark put himself on a schedule — as his newest mission, he forced himself to read, write, and edit for several hours each day. The pair worked hard to make the book apolitical, but being released in an election year it was perhaps inevitable that commentators and pundits would put their own spin on it.

The search results when you type Mark's name into Google have evolved over time since the book launch. Most recent are reports concerning the settlement reached with the Pentagon regarding proceeds from *No Easy Day*, and Mark's lawsuit against his former attorney. Mark insists that from the beginning, the intent with the book was to give the credit to the operators who saw this mission through. Many people at the highest levels were taking credit for the UBL mission, and he wanted to ensure the teammates he trained and served with that night received accolades for their work. This extended to disbursement of money from book sales to charities that supported the Naval Special Warfare community.

All the money, and the reason Mark put his commitment to donate the proceeds from the book in writing, is for everyone to see his genuine intentions. He didn't want this to be an "after the fact" gesture to show people he was a good guy.

With his name eventually leaked, he wasn't worried about the security aspect of life, but he was worried about the unknown. He's maintained his anonymity and does a pretty good job of laying low, hiding in plain sight.

Since publishing *No Easy Day*, there's been heated debate within and at the periphery of the special-operations-forces (SOF) community. In some circles, Mark has been accused of betraying the ethos of the "quiet professional," while other SEALs we've spoken to privately commend him for bringing the work of SOF to a wider public, without seeking to make political capital out of their successes. He finished with these thoughts: "If people read the book and saw the words that are clearly spelled out in every single page, it shows who I am. The people who know me, the people I have worked with and deployed with — they have zero issues with me."



RECOIL: Some of the books you read growing up got you to focus on wanting to become a SEAL. What titles did you read?

Mark Owen: The one that I remember was *Men With Green Faces*. I met the author, and we got to exchange books — that was a really cool moment in my life. I was in junior high when I read these books, and I didn't just read SEAL books. I read all the SOF books, the LRRP books; there just seemed to be a ton of them out there. Everybody has read *Rogue Warrior*.

Growing up in Alaska, with its harsh winters and living in a remote area, how did this environment affect you?

MO: I drove a snowmobile to school everyday. I bought my first AR-15,

a Colt, from my history teacher at school. I remember giving him \$700 — he gave me the gun, and I put it in my locker until the end of the day when I drove it home. My dad and I would catch animals, snaring beavers out of the traps. My mom would make a fur hat. It was totally different than growing up anywhere else — no gas stations, no stores, one TV channel.

At any point could you equate growing up in Alaska with the harshness of going through BUD/S?

MO: Not specifically. I have way too many friends who grew up in big cities and became great SEALs. I think one of the things that helped me is that you don't grow up soft there. Growing up in Alaska, it's OK

to sleep outside, it's OK to be cold, it's OK to have to walk through the mountains. There's a survival aspect — if you left the village you had to find your way home. There were no road signs; this was well before handheld GPS's came into play. I think I just learned about survival. And I'm probably a better shot because I grew up with a gun in hand.

You mention that swimming in BUD/S gave you some problems. Any swimming up in Alaska?

MO: Very little, it's cold as f@ck! We did some watersports, but obviously there was no swim team; there wasn't any of that. I was a pretty weak swimmer, and one of my biggest worries going into BUD/S was the water.



uncomfortable. The better you can be in those uncomfortable and shitty positions, the better off you'll be in life.

Did you finish BUD/S and go straight to SEAL Team 5?

MO: I had already been to jump school in college at ROTC, so after BUD/S, I didn't go to jump school with my class. I went right to Team 5 and started what was called SEAL Tactical Training, five more months of training. After that, I went right into a platoon at Team 5, did the Trident boards, had my cool-off period, got my Trident, and started training up with them. Did a deployment to Japan, then September 11 happened. I came back and did another train-up. In my second platoon, we deployed to Iraq.

You didn't go to Afghanistan at all, just straight to Iraq?

MO: No, until I was at DEVGRU, I never went to Afghanistan. It was odd at the beginning — the East Coast and West Coast teams were split. Team 3 was the desert team, but they sent them to the winter in Afghanistan, and they showed up without any cold-weather gear. We were the cold-weather platoon, and we were in Okinawa, Japan, and the Philippines.

How many deployments did you with Team 5 before you went to DEVGRU?

MO: Two. I know a couple of guys who have done it in one platoon, but typically the rules are, timeline-wise, you have to knock out two platoons or roughly five years and then you can screen and go. There was no f@cking way I was going to become a SEAL and not at least attempt to go to Dam Neck.

Did you have a career choice?

MO: Everybody knew there was something else that was out there, something more elite, something harder to

get into. Failing Green Team [selection for DEVGRU] would have been harder than failing BUD/S, because now I was a SEAL ... I've been a SEAL for five years, and now I couldn't pass something? There are a lot of nerves associated with that.

If you fail, are you harder on yourself or the guys harder on you?

MO: You're harder on yourself. The guys understand. There are two types, the guys who haven't gone, but want to go. They see guys coming back, and they're like, "Hey what happened, why didn't you..." It's not a, "Hey you're all f@cked up." Then there are the guys who have tried it and have come back, and now they are relatively senior in the regular teams.

If you fail out of Green Team and come back to your platoon, is someone always going to give you a jab?

MO: Maybe. I have a lot of good friends who are willing to talk shit. I tell people all the time that if I'm not talking shit with you, I probably don't like you. If you can't laugh and joke around with buddies ... trust me, I talk a lot about my lame jokes. I'm not that quick witted; I have friends who are, and they knew I was slow. They're your boys for a reason.

How many SEALs started with you at Green Team?

MO: I don't remember. I thought Green Team was 100 times harder than BUD/S. BUD/S was the kick in the balls — are you going to quit? Green Team was a whole different animal because now you are a SEAL, and you don't want to fail. There's a lot more pressure on yourself. They put so much stress and pressure on you and want to see you perform at the highest levels. If you don't, you're gone. Nothing wrong with that — that's why we're so successful.

Did your mental fortitude get you through the swimming?

MO: With the water stuff it's more just about not panicking. I can swim. I always have my swimming partner; he would always guide on the long swims. I linked up with a guy who was a much better swimmer than I was — we were swim buddies, and he would do all of the guiding. I would never take my face out of the water, except to breathe. I would stare at his flippers, because he'd always be just in front of me, and I would kick the shit out of it to pass the swim. The drown-proofing and tying your hands and feet — that was a little more nerve wracking for me. Just don't panic, remain calm, and you'll figure it out. BUD/S is about teaching you to be comfortable being

How many different companies did you work with to help improve their gear, and are you still working with some of them?

MO: Yes, a ton. Over the years you come to these shows, and you just work with the different vendors that make your stuff. I enjoy it, I'm the type of guy that can look at a spoon and be like, we need to improve this spoon. I refuse to settle on a piece of equipment; if something is wrong with it, I want to improve it. I would spend a lot of my own time and money helping people tweak stuff.

wood stock. I want an old-school AK, I want a 417, a 416 ... kind of hit all the bases.

How about transition to being a civilian? What was it like driving out of the compound your last time?

MO: Scary as shit. Sunny day, I never thought I'd get out. Remember, I told myself at the 10-year mark that I would look at myself and make the decision. If you went over 10, why would you get out at 14 or 15? May as well stay in for 20 to get your pension. But — my first deployment, September 11 happens;

could go to the Command and see any of our corpsman — call them up, and they'd set up a meeting with a doctor at our facility. Once you get out, that's long gone. I dealt with the VA for a year and a half for my neck. Motrin, Motrin, Motrin...

When did you make the decision to write *No Easy Day*?

MO: Right as I was getting out. I talked to some of my buddies about it — I don't make any decision in a vacuum. I'm not the smartest guy in the room; that's why you have friends.



You were at DEVGRU, with access to just about anything you wanted. Going into civilian life, do you miss that access — and what is your gun collection like now?

MO: You may have seen my safe on Instagram. I just got a safe this year — I honestly didn't have a lot of guns personally. Again, military paycheck! I shoot all that I want, through somebody else's gun that's essentially mine, spec'ed out exactly how I want it. I'm not spending money on ammo, I can drive to work, and do it anytime I want. I find myself wanting to build the exact version of what I had when I was in. I've got to have an old-school M14,

One mind, any weapon. Mark shooting a SilencerCo Osprey-equipped Glock from Salient Arms.

the last thing I did was the [bin Laden] raid. Seemed like good bookends.

Did you ever want to hit reverse and go back through the gates?

MO: Initially, it was scary, but I was very optimistic. I was like, let's figure this out — but how do you figure it out, what do you do? I got out, received a plaque with my name misspelled. It was my first name of all things.

How much did the Navy help out with living, moving, or helping with taxes?

MO: They help out, if you needed a will or a power of attorney they had a JAG there. Medically it was nice; I

They can call you out on stuff or just be a sanity check. In the community, to be the guy who goes out and writes a book — I knew that was going to be a very touchy, sticky situation. We're supposed to be the "quiet professionals." But that's such a bullshit excuse, I don't take it at all. People just don't read — go to the bookstore and see all the books that are out there: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, SOF, CIA, everybody, you name it, has written a book. The commanders that started SEAL Team 6 and Delta Force have both written books. I knew it was going to be sticky, and I've tried hard to do it the right way, controlling the imaging.



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- ▶ Dom Raso's Dynamis Blade by Winkler Knives II
- ▶ Griffon Industries holster
- ▶ SureFire E1E flashlight

Was this easy to write for you?

MO: A co-writer helps for someone who doesn't just open up, like most SOF guys — a lot of alpha males running around, they just don't come home and go like, "Right, here is what I was thinking." It was helpful having Kevin Maurer there, the co-writer. He could ask the right questions.

In *No Easy Day* you talk about getting the call; a group of handpicked guys go somewhere and train. How long did you train on that mockup?

MO: A couple of weeks. It was real quick. I've never rehearsed for a single operation in my life, other than this one. Not one.

What was the mood of your team like?

MO: Epic! A lot of guys were wondering, "Is this legit?" It seemed very legit. This one seemed much different, seemed much more real. I saw the

intel, and I was very optimistic. F@ck it, if it isn't him, whoever lives there is going to have a bad night — somebody shady is living there!

How authentic was the movement in the movie *Zero Dark Thirty*?

MO: I don't remember paying too much attention to the movie. It's Hollywood; it's a cheesy version of what really happened. They were using flashlights and yelling and talking — there was none of that going on. We were all slow and steady.

Where were you when you found out your name had been leaked by the press?

MO: I was doing a charity skydiving event for the NSW Foundation. I was going to do some tandem jumps with some civilians, out at this point in San Diego. Between jumps I checked my phone, and my literary agent had

blown my phone up. I called her, "It's out, Fox News just ran your name, it's going viral." I don't know if it was immaturity on my part to think that I could keep that safe. It was somebody who knew me; it was that simple. Do I think it was a SEAL who leaked my name? No I don't, I really don't. It was somebody else who knew enough about me — they knew I'm from Alaska, they put two and two together.

How soon after *No Easy Day* did you start working on *No Hero*?

MO: A while! Just because of the drama around *No Easy Day*. After that kind of faded away.

How did you want *No Hero* to appear to the reader?

MO: OK, I'm not writing self-help books — I'm not some sort of Tony Robbins guru, that's not it. I want action-packed, fun stuff, but I want it to have

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something deeper than a big ego, “I am bad and I go kill people.” That’s fine, but what were my takeaways? My career, when I look back at it, it’s not the *Captain Phillips*, the bin Laden stuff — it’s the other lessons that I learned. These are the stories in *No Hero*.

What was the hardest chapter to write?

MO: The last one. I scratched the surface of the emotional toll, the PTSD stuff, at the end. I think it’s important to show that SEALs suffer, law enforcement can suffer. I think if folks from my perspective can open up and talk about it, it becomes less of a taboo thing to do. The first responders who went into Sandy Hook, I can’t even fathom seeing those kids. War is

ugly. Sometimes it’s cool, it’s fun, it’s sexy. But it’s very f@cking ugly, and it’s nasty. It takes its toll on the operators. Most guys won’t allow themselves to process this when they’re still in.

Let’s talk about the rifle you’re holding on the cover of this issue of RECOIL.

You shot a piston gun at DEVGRU, and you’ve got a DI gun here.

MO: I’ve run gas and piston. I had a Colt gun for years, had no issues with it — suppressed, unsuppressed, dirty. Got the 416s, loved them. Loved my 416; I have an MR556. However, when it came to the *No Easy Day* gun, we wanted to keep the price point down.

If you were called to war tomorrow, any

problem taking this weapon with you?

MO: No, that’s why I built it the way I did. The only thing looking back that I would add would be a new charging handle — I usually ran an upgraded charging handle. Everyone who was part of this rifle project was excited to be involved.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

MO: I don’t know, I’m still trying to figure it out. I try and stay in my “3-foot world.” I’ve got so much going on right now, I’m just trying to control what I can to get through it. I definitely see myself more involved in the [firearms] industry somehow. I’ve got a lot of good ideas. **R**

THE
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THE MISSION THAT KILLED
OSAMA BIN LADEN
NO EASY DAY
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A NAVY SEAL
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HARD USE

MARK OWEN'S LIMITED-EDITION NO EASY DAY SPECIAL MISSIONS CARBINE

Are you looking for a carbine that can be both proudly displayed on your wall in a glass case as well as taken to war? Mark Owen and USM4 have you covered. Owen, a former member of SEAL Team 6, wrote about his experiences in his bestselling book, *No Easy Day*. (Check out his interview on page 80.) He spec'ed out the No Easy Day Special Missions Carbine (SMC) based on his 14 years of service, combat deployments, and hundreds of missions.

The rifle is designed for hard use, with top-of-the-line components throughout. The heart of the weapon is a complete Colt Mil-spec upper assembly with a 14.5-inch SOCOM profile chrome-lined barrel, pinned low-profile gas block, HPT/MPI bolt carrier group, Centurion Arms CMR 12-inch lightweight hand-guard and rail covers, Magpul vertical grip, and permanently attached AAC Blackout 51T flash hider.

The gun is topped with an EOTech EXPS3-4 with a G33.STS magnifier, and you can light up the night with a Surefire M600 ultra scout 500 lumen LED weapon light. The lower is a USM4 billet receiver with a Geissele SSA trigger, ergo pistol grip, an end plate with QD socket, and a Magpul CTR buttstock.

Additionally, you get two Magpul 30-round magazines, a Viking Tactics wide padded Mk2 sling, and Princeton Tec Remix Pro headlamp. All this badassery comes securely packed in a Pelican 1750 case. Not to mention an autographed and serialized hardcover copy of *No Easy Day*.

If your bank account can handle it, the No Easy Day SMC is not just a rifle, but a complete weapons system. That term may be overused, but USM4 indeed offers a long laundry list of options and accessories to complement the SMC. It normally comes in black, but can be camo hydrodipped for an extra \$700. Other options include an AAC M4-2000 suppressor, AN/PEQ-15 (civilian version), TNVC/Sentinel Binocular Night Vision System, Wilcox L4 G24 NVG helmet mount, and Ops-Core Base Jump helmet.

Some readers may scoff at the price tag — for those so inclined, look at the build sheet and roll your own. This is a limited-edition build for a limited number of buyers who appreciate what it represents, simple as that. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Special Forces Association and the Special Operations Care Fund.

MAKE:	USM4
MODEL:	No Easy Day Special Missions Carbine
CALIBER:	5.56mm
MAG CAPACITY:	30 rounds
LENGTH:	31.5 to 34.75 inches
BARREL LENGTH:	14.5 inches
WEIGHT (EMPTY):	9 pounds (with all standard accessories)
MSRP:	\$4,595
URL:	www.usm4.com
ACCESSORIES:	
Camo hydrodip (optional)	\$700
AAC M4-2000 Suppressor	\$895
AN/PEQ-15	\$1,295
TNVC/Sentinel BNVS	\$7,840
Wilcox helmet mount	\$368
Ops-Core Fast Base helmet	\$286



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GRAD SCHOOL

OPSPEC TRAINING'S “PRACTICAL FUNDAMENTALS” CLASS, AND WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW ABOUT PISTOL SHOOTING

BY TOM MARSHALL

It almost sounds like a riddle, or a really bad shooting joke: “How do you solve marksmanship problems? With marksmanship!” But it’s neither a riddle, nor a joke. The temptation is to sit there on your couch, or your toilet, and scoff. Of course, the key to good shooting is marksmanship. But people love gadgets. We’re so proud of our ingenuity and our ability to innovate that we let our equipment short-circuit our skill set. Everything from race holsters to red dots have been designed and marketed to make us “better” shooters — a faster first shot, easier target acquisition, and more shots with less trigger manipulation. Don’t get us wrong, we’re not turning our noses up at any of that stuff — we have an aftermarket trigger and sights on our Glock.

But you have to attend to your fundamentals, and this is the philosophy of the instructors at Operational Specific Training. We recently attended their two-day Practical Fundamentals course and were highly impressed with how much progress was achievable with so little training time. OpSpec stresses that futzing with your equipment isn’t necessary, and none of it will solve whatever shortcomings you might have as a marksman.

Before we go any further, we should address a question that gets overlooked by most training articles — namely, “Is this class for me?” The answer, for 90 percent of people reading this, is “yes.” Practical Fundamentals is one of those classes that is very difficult to package neatly as either basic



Top: Most of the course is shot at close distance to really perfect technical marksmanship. Left: Throughout the course, Jerry reinforces range work with real-life anecdotes and academic lecture.

or advanced. The drills and principles they cover are simple, but not easy. Let's put it this way: if you just bought your first gun, and you're still waiting for your CCW card to come in the mail, this might not be the class for you. If you've been shooting for more than three months and can safely work from the holster, you wouldn't be left behind in a Practical Fundamentals class.

The instructors themselves bring an absolute wealth of knowledge to the table. Our class of 16 students had three instructors. This works out to a great ratio of about 5:1 — noteworthy all by itself. We've heard that the optimal

student-teacher ratio in any kind of academic environment is 7:1. We'd guess most of our military training was about 10:1, and most college classes are somewhere closer to 25:1. The folks at OpSpec provide a small group environment that is intensive and allows each student to progress as far, and as fast, as possible in the time allotted.

While all fundamentals are important, trigger control is arguably particularly so — as poor trigger control can have a disproportionately negative

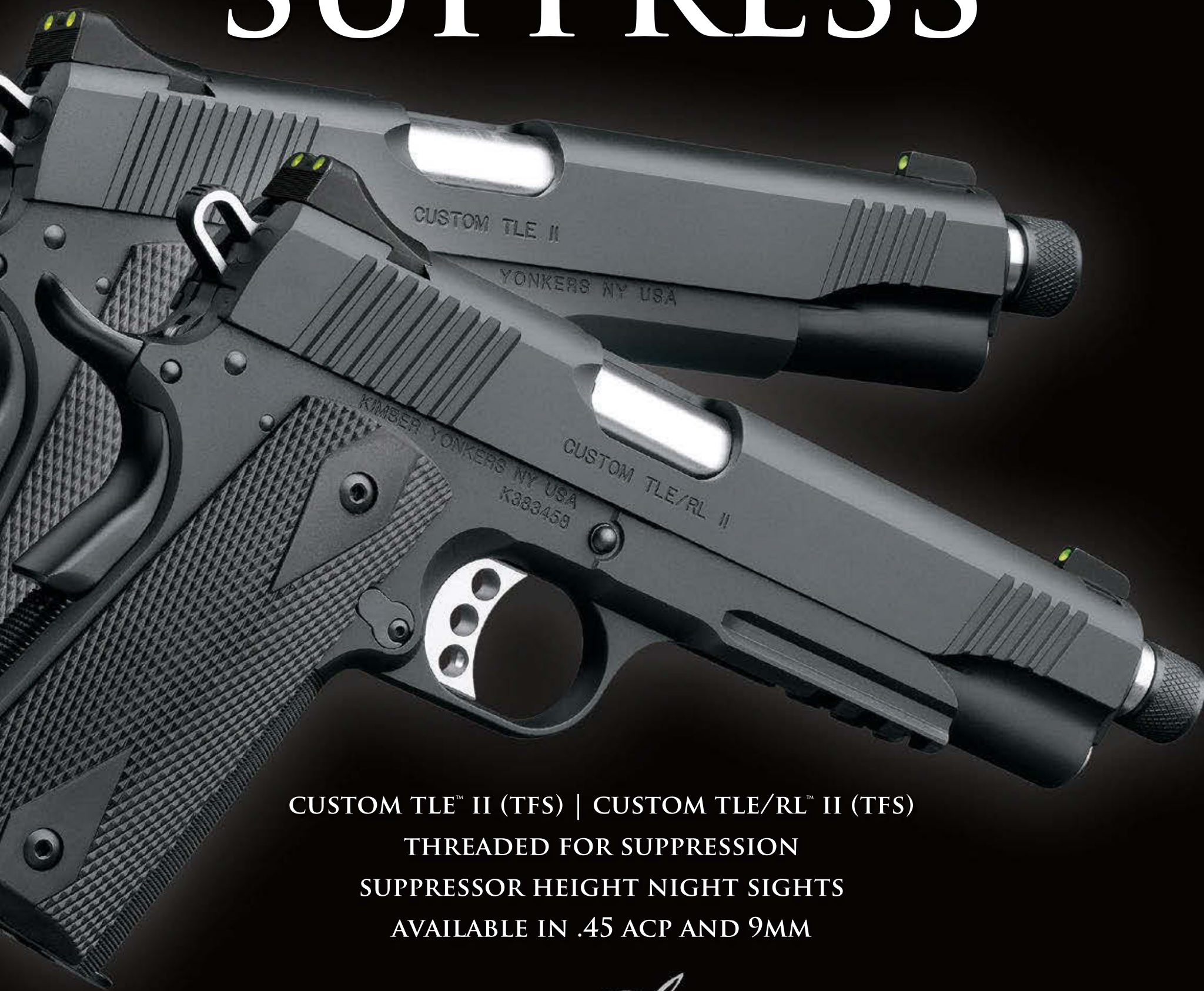
impact on your accuracy. You will spend most of your time on trigger control in this class. In fact, in his opening speech, Bruce Gray relates that this course has been referred to as a “Ph.D. in trigger control.” We tend to agree.

In fact, we became more intimate with our trigger system in two days than we ever really knew how to before. How so? Think about this: say your carry pistol has a trigger pull of 4.5 pounds. When you sight in on your target and begin that slow, steady

Bruce demonstrating the SIG P320. Gray-guns has a very close relationship with SIG and often consults for product improvement.



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press to the rear, how do you know that you've applied 4.5 pounds of pressure? We used to think the answer to that question was "the gun goes off." It makes sense if you don't really think about it — which we didn't, for a long time — but the truth is slightly more complicated. Let's stick with our example of a 4.5-pound trigger. In this case, the gun will go bang if you apply 4.5 pounds of pressure to the trigger. But it'll also go bang if you apply 24.5 pounds of pressure. The difference between the two is where the shot will land. The closer you can come to applying exactly the pressure needed to run the trigger, the faster and more accurate you can be.

There are some guidelines and principles that you can work on yourself. The first is dry-fire practice. Dry fire is not sexy or glamorous, but it's a crucial part of your training regimen. If you don't do any dry-fire practice, you're shorting your own potential and you're definitely not getting your money's worth during live-fire range

Because it focuses on the practical application of fundamentals, this class is not gear intensive. Our load-out looked like this:

» Blackhawk instructor's belt

» X-Concealment kydex holster and double mag pouch

» Glock 19 with OEM extended mag release, Meprolight night sights, and Haley Strategic "Skimmer" trigger

» Three magazines

» 1,000 rounds Hornady "American Gunner" 124-grain XTP +P. (While this is a great load, it isn't recommended for high round-count classes like this, but we shot what was on hand.)

sessions. Jerry Jones recommends 10 minutes of dry training, four nights a week. If you can stick to this regimen, or close to it, it'll translate into tangible improvements.

Secondly, begin and end every range day with fundamental marksmanship. I personally set aside, at a minimum, my first five rounds and my last five rounds to focused, untimed fire. My goal for these strings is to put all my rounds into a single, ragged hole. Be conscious of your trigger and how it changes through the length of your press. Try to feel exactly when and how your trigger resists right before the break.

"Don't *make* the gun go off, *allow* it to go off." A direct quote from the instructors. It may sound a little Zen, or New Age, but it really helped a lot. Do your part, but allow the machine (your weapon) to do its part as well. Many shooters invest hundreds of dollars into things like barrel porting, slide lightening, tungsten guide rods, and heavy springs in order to control recoil.

Mastering your trigger press will make it easier for you to work with the gun's recoil, instead of spending money and man-hours trying to get around it.

Of course, trigger press alone is not enough. That's why there are seven fundamentals (stance, grip, sight alignment, sight picture, trigger control, breathing, and follow through), and not one. One of the concepts that the OpSpec instructors are huge advocates is called spot shooting. This is not to be confused with point shooting, an entirely different approach to marksmanship. When you hang your target and take up a sight picture, think about what you're specifically taking a mental picture of. We see a lot of shooters, and some instructors, who say the "A" box of an IPSC silhouette should be your target — as long as your sights are inside that A-box, you're on target. For me, my target was the letter A itself. As long as my sights were resting somewhere on the letter A in the middle of that box, I was properly sighted in.





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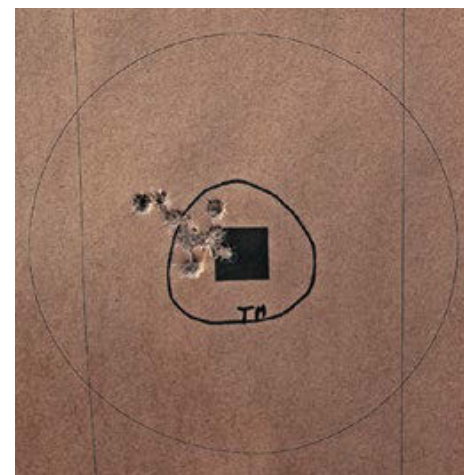
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accuracy are inversely proportional — meaning you have to give up some of one to get more of the other. Bruce and his colleagues argue that this is not true. Frankly, we were a little incredulous of this since it's always a struggle to get faster, and we have usually sacrificed accuracy to do it. After spending so much time focused solely on trigger manipulation, both during the class and in training since then, we're beginning to see things their way.

A related point stressed during the class was that gun handling doesn't put rounds on target. There are a lot of fancy YouTube videos where people who bill themselves as professional instructors are displaying bullshit techniques

like rapid-fire dual-wielding and hanging upside down out of vehicles. It looks cool, and it's probably a ton of fun to practice, but none of it matters if you can't put those bullets exactly where you want them to go and do it on command. Every. Single. Time. **R**



Top: We were asked to self-estimate our shot group for untimed fire at any distance. Top: Results of the walk-back. The circle is a little over 3 inches across. Bottom: Start at the 3-yard line. Fire five rounds. Take two steps back. Repeat until you're outside your circle. We got to 10 yards this time.

OpSpec taught me that I should strive for better. The letter A isn't good enough — the exact spot where the cross-bar meets the left leg of the letter A, that's a proper point-of-aim. Or the exact spot where the two legs form the peak, hence the term "spot shooting." Some of you may be familiar with the phrase "aim small, miss small" — the smaller your point of aim, the closer to that point your misses will be. Bruce, Jerry, and Mike re-tooled this phrase to be "aim small, hit small" — the smaller your point of aim, the smaller your group. The principle is the same, but the psychology is different. It's a valuable distinction, as from the tactical point of view, it reinforces the idea that just because you didn't hit the exact spot you were aiming at doesn't mean you missed.

Perhaps the biggest paradigm shift was the idea that you don't have to sacrifice accuracy to gain speed. It's almost universally accepted in the shooting community that speed and



OPSPEC INSTRUCTORS

OpSpec's senior instructor, Bruce Gray, has over three decades of shooting experience to his name. He's also the owner of Grayguns Inc., a gunsmith service specializing primarily in SIG pistols, and knows more about the internals of the H&K P7 than just about anyone outside of Oberndorf. He's held master-level classifications in NRA Action Pistol, IPSC, and IDPA. He's also a California POST-certified rangemaster and a deputy sheriff in Oregon. Jerry Jones is the president of OpSpec training and a veteran sheriff's deputy who serves on a multi-jurisdictional SWAT team. He contributes to a number of shooting publications, including the blog Modern Service Weapons — a cornerstone of this author's weekly professional reading. Our third instructor was Michael Wray, a fellow SWAT Operator and Marine Corps Special Operations veteran. As individuals, each is highly seasoned and totally dialed in to their students. As a team, they're the kind of crew that might make you a better shooter just by standing next to you on the line.

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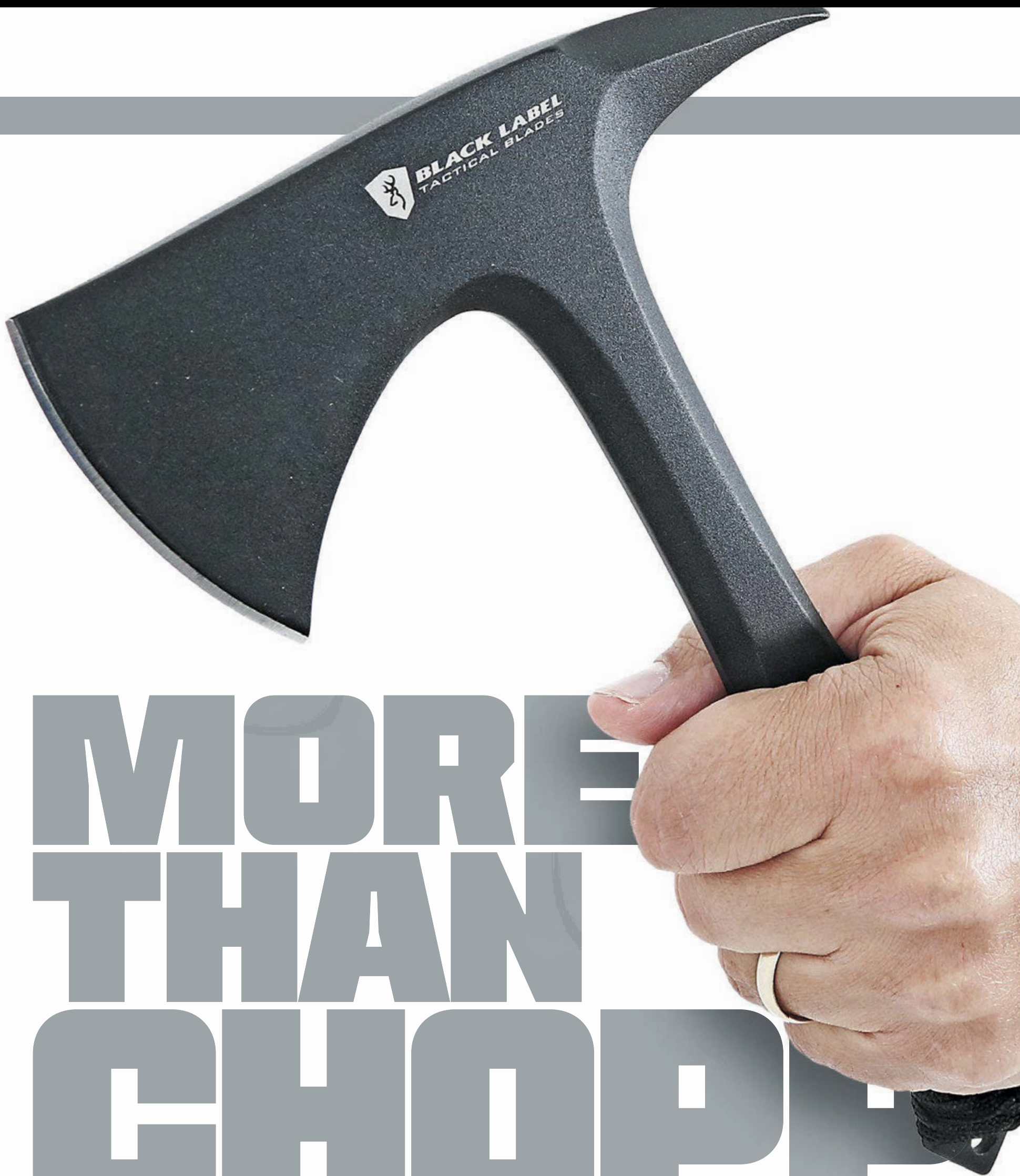
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GET A HANDLE ON CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT WITH A TOMAHAWK

BY JARED WIHONGI | PHOTOS BY PATRICK VUONG

If you've had the chance to pick up one of the latest tactical tomahawks, your reaction was probably something like, "Whoa, that's really cool...now how do I use it?" There's been a resurgence in the popularity of these weapons in recent years, and for good reason. Not many tools can match the tomahawk for sheer versatility of function — and effectiveness in close-quarters combat.

The basic design is nothing new, with variations a favorite among warriors of many cultures throughout history. Shortly after the introduction of metal tools to North America, Native Americans quickly adapted them to axe heads, previously fashioned with stone or deer antler. Thus was the development of what we now call the tomahawk, a staple tool of frontiers-

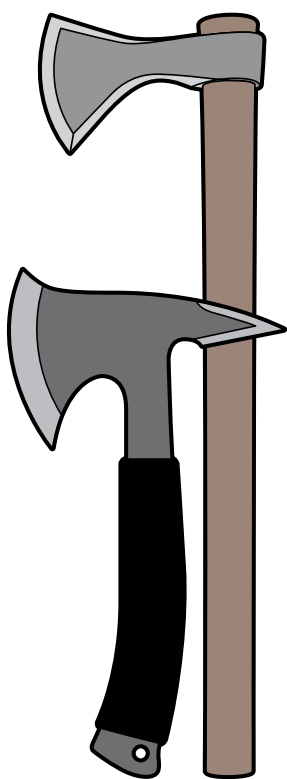
men. My ancestors, the native Maori warriors of New Zealand, also went through a similar evolutionary process with their weapons after the arrival of metal-bearing Europeans. Axe heads were recognized for their potential and affixed to ornately carved handles, quickly becoming a favorite close-quarters weapon called *patiti*.

Today the word tomahawk is used loosely to refer to pretty much any one-handed tactical axe. But they may not necessarily replicate the dimensions of the original Native American and frontiersman designs, which commonly utilized a long, straight wooden shaft of about 2 feet with a long head and narrow cutting edge of roughly

4 inches. Many modern design changes can be attributed to advances in materials used in production today. Much like a good knife, a good tomahawk can be used as an everyday multitool, fulfilling various functions. But when the proverbial fecal matter hits the ventilator, the simple effectiveness of the tomahawk in close-quarters combat (CQC) is hard to match. Few weapons in the modern arsenal are capable of delivering lacerations, blunt trauma, and even puncturing wounds with the efficiency of a well-made tomahawk.

ING

SAFETY DISCLAIMER
The concepts shown here are for illustrative purposes only. Seek professional training or instruction before attempting any techniques discussed or shown in this story.



ANATOMY

Reach is one of the advantages a tomahawk gives the wielder in a CQC scenario. This will vary with design, but most tomahawks range from 18 to 24 inches long. The length of the handle makes a difference in combat, as a longer handle provides more reach, allowing more standoff distance from an assailant — which in turn affords more reaction time. The potential to generate more centrifugal force with each swing is also maximized with a longer handle. However, the longer the handle, the more difficult to utilize the weapon at extremely close quarters, potentially providing an assailant opportunities to control your weapon in this situation.

The size of the axe head will also make a difference. The greater the mass, the greater the force that can be generated with each strike. But again, too much mass will slow the weapon down and make it difficult to wield and recover from committed swings. Native Americans seem to have found the perfect balance between handle length and axe head size to accommodate their fighting style, their build, and the environment in which they fought. You too will need to find a tomahawk that likewise takes these factors into consideration. Sometimes a shorter handle makes the tomahawk more practical with regards to where and when you can carry it, which again may end up being the overwhelming factor in the design you choose.

While teaching combatives programs in various countries to various types of clientele, including covert operators, I see a lot of variation in the permissiveness of various environments worldwide. For civilian everyday carry (EDC), I'm a proponent of tools that can be used for common tasks, but that also double as defensive weapons. That way the likelihood will be greater that you'll keep carrying it on your person or in an accessible location — even

when the novelty of the latest new toy wears off. The more you carry it, the more likely you'll have it with you when the time comes that you need it. Two great examples of this are tactical pens and tactical lights. It's also important to carry weapons that might not have multi-function roles, such as firearms, but people by nature tend to take the path of least resistance and will often stop carrying EDC weapons once it becomes inconvenient. If it fills several roles, then you have more reasons to carry it.

MANY USES

The tomahawk is a tool that certainly fits the multipurpose role. It might not be a practical EDC item for every situation, but in permissive environments there's no reason why you can't have one in your car, trailer, boat, bug-out bag, or on your tactical kit. And certainly you can have one in your house. Part of the resurgence in popularity of the tomahawk with military personnel, local patrol officers, and even SWAT teams is the fact that in addition to being a great backup weapon, it can be used as an entry breaching tool, an extraction tool, and a general purpose cutting and chopping tool.

When used as a defensive weapon, the tomahawk in most places will fall into the lethal weapon category, much like a gun or knife. Thus, it will be difficult to justify using one when you're not in fear of death or serious bodily injury to yourself or another person you're trying to protect.

The reality of a combative encounter, as opposed to a combat-sports match, is there are a lot of unknowns and variables that must be accounted for. For example, the number of assailants, the size, gender, and physique of the assailant(s), as well as the lighting conditions, the environment, and the weapons you and/or the assailant might be armed with — and more. Therefore

unless you train long and often to prepare for the many conceivable self-defense scenarios one could get caught in, my recommendation is to base your training on sound principles that can be readily adapted to any problem you might face, for combatives is truly a dynamic process of evaluating, deciding, and acting. In the Filipino martial art of Pekiti-Tirsa Kali, we call this the Transferable Methodology Principle, or the ability to apply techniques, tactics, and countermeasures with consistency across various weapon systems and types of attack. That being said, let's dive into the dynamics of the tomahawk and a few basic concepts.

GRIP

How do you hold a tomahawk? Simple. Take a good firm hammer-grip like you would if you were hitting a nail or chopping wood with a hatchet. Try to leave an inch or two at the base for close-quarter pommel strikes.

In extremely close quarters where



MORE 411:

Please turn to page 110 for a buyer's guide on tomahawks.

> Grip your tomahawk like you would a hammer, leaving an inch or two from the bottom so you can use the pommel. You can also choke up on the handle for better control of the edge.

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USA

EDGE (BIT)

The fundamental and most obvious ability of the tomahawk is to deliver powerful and decisive one-hit one-kill damage with the primary edge of the weapon. Depending on the weight of your tomahawk, practice delivering short non-telegraphed “broken” strikes that can not only create openings, but also create enough injury to a hand or forearm to make holding a weapon difficult for an assailant. For more powerful “fluid” strikes, recovery will be important as it’s easy to leave openings for counterattacks if you miss your mark.

To minimize this, practice a downward angle close to 45 degrees, letting the weight of the weapon flow down then back up over the opposite shoulder. A follow-up backhand strike can then be delivered defensively or in a combination attack, but this strike should also be in a similar downward 45-degree motion. Try to practice these two strike angles in a fluid figure-eight motion — this fluidity will add power, speed, and controllability to your tomahawk swings. In close-quarters where you may employ a choked-up grip, cutting motions could also be used as you gain more control of the head of the tomahawk.

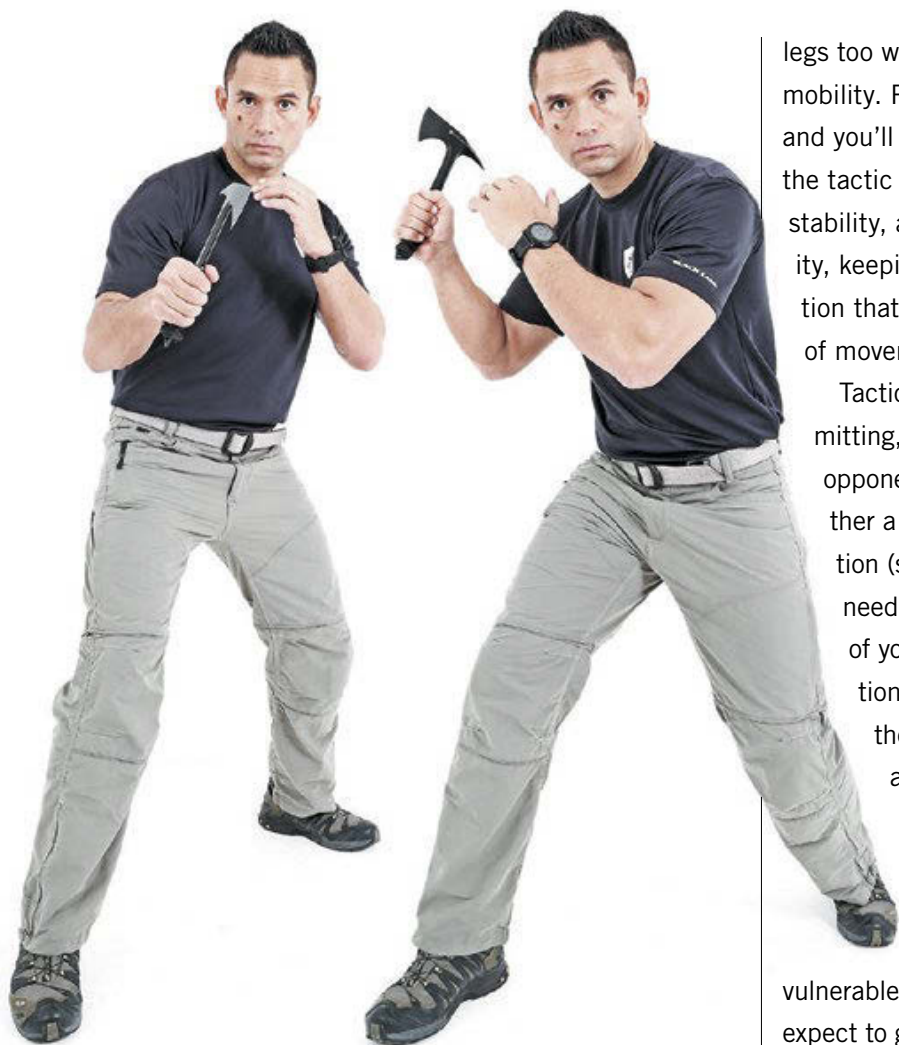
legs too wide, and you’ll have limited mobility. Position your legs too narrow, and you’ll have poor balance. Stick to the tactic of keeping one foot flat for stability, and one heel light for mobility, keeping a 60/40 weight distribution that changes based on direction of movement.

Tactically, and environment permitting, try to position yourself to an opponent’s “outside line,” taking either a true-lead or false-lead position (see image). This means you’ll need to quickly assess which side of your assailant’s body is positioned forward, and move toward the outside of their forward arm and toward his back. This will put you in a position where your assailant will have difficulty assaulting you while simultaneously being vulnerable to your counterattacks. Only expect to get slight angles on your opponent and to keep moving, as he will also reposition himself based on your movement. Keep in mind, however, that while fighting on the outside line might be a preference, training “inside line” and “centerline” are also important as you cannot always dictate position.

CHOPPING WITH THE PRIMARY

△ Like in shooting, position and mobility are vital to proper tomahawk use. Here Jared Wihongi demonstrates a “true lead” (left) versus a “false lead” (right), both of which can be used depending on your circumstances and your assailant(s).

> Tomahawk chop: Swinging downward 45 degrees diagonally can deliver one-hit-one-kill damage.



wide swings become more of a liability, you can choke up higher on the handle to give you more control of the head for offensive and defensive application. Don’t go any further with grip changes, which are better suited for Hollywood set pieces rather than real-life street encounters. Changing hands or grips with any weapon while someone is trying to kill you is generally not a good idea, especially once physiological stress symptoms take effect in life-and-death situations, such as the loss of fine motor control.

POSITION AND MOBILITY

Combatives are dynamic, and there’s not typically a lot of time for posturing and stances that you often see in combat sports like boxing or mixed martial arts. Much like in football, you may assume a position before the action starts, but never return to that position once the contact begins. What’s more important is mobility (i.e. footwork) and balance. Position your



PHASE 5

WEAPON SYSTEMS INC.

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ATLASONE™ FEATURES

- PHASE 5 AMBIDEXTROUS BATTLE LATCH/CHARGING HANDLE ASSEMBLY (ABL/CHA™)
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Length: 24"	Weight: 5lb 4.5oz	5.56 NATO 223 REM	PN: ATLAS ONE
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✓ Taking out a bad guy's eyes or nose with a tomahawk is quite effective and very unexpected.

THRUSTING WITH THE LEAD POINT (TOE)

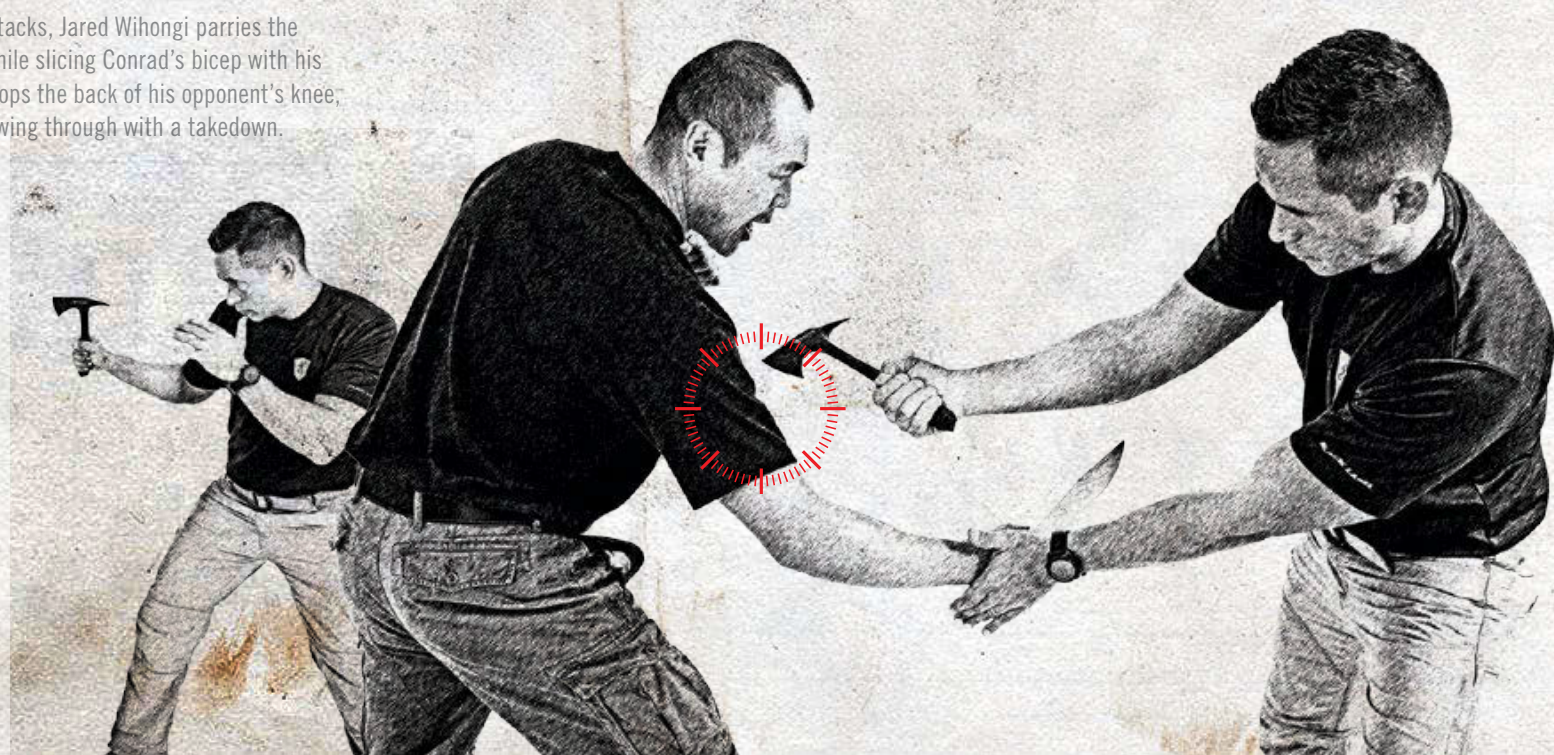
Utilizing economy of motion in combatives is always a good idea. The fastest path from A to B is a straight line,

and not many people expect a thrusting attack coming from a tomahawk. Aim the lead point straight between your opponent's eyes. If you hit the nose, expect a small window of opportunity

where you can deliver a more decisive blow before your assailant recovers. If you miss the nose, you still have high-value targets on either side that will give you the same advantage.



> As Conrad Bui (left) attacks, Jared Wihongi parries the stab with his left hand while slicing Conrad's bicep with his tomahawk. Then Jared chops the back of his opponent's knee, having the option of following through with a takedown.



HOOING WITH THE FOLLOWING EDGE (HEEL)

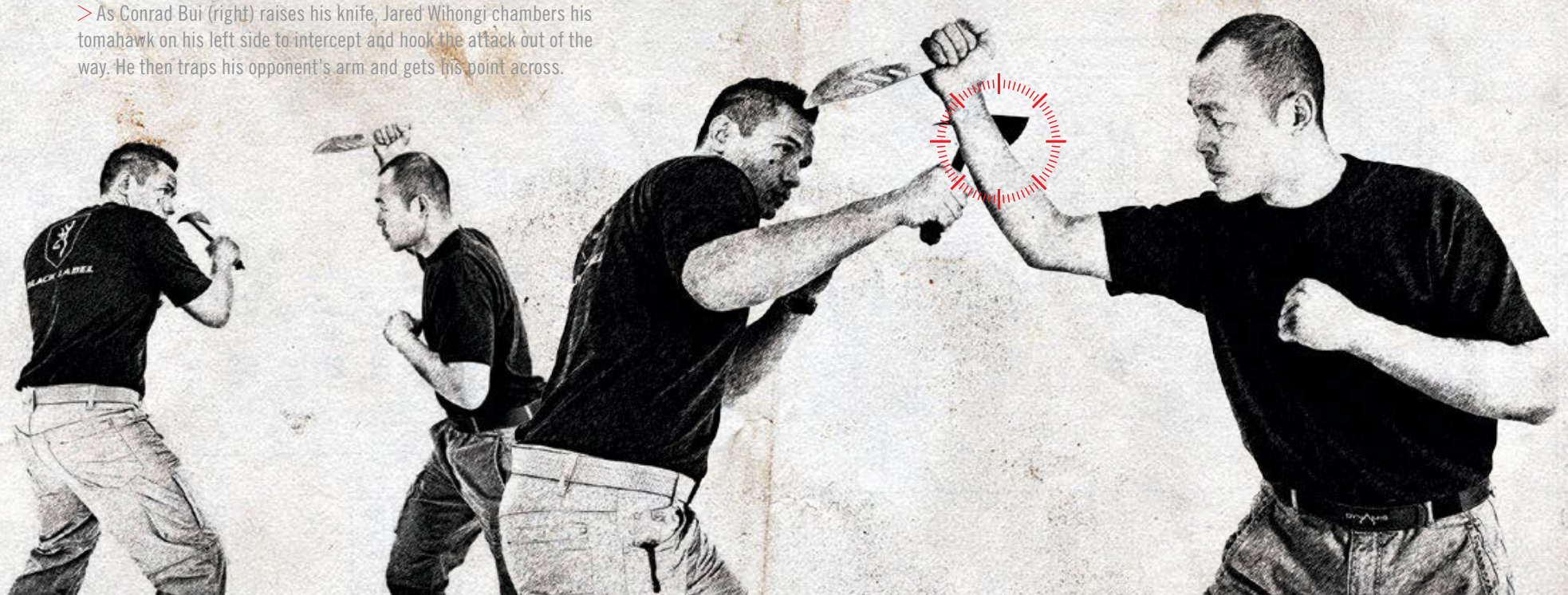
One of the biggest advantages of this weapon is the ability to hook and control weapons, limbs, heads, or torsos with the tomahawk's heel (also known as the

following edge) while inflicting damage with the following point. Use this technique to create openings for counterattacks, to disrupt your opponent's balance, and even to disarm them.

> A tomahawk's "following edge" can be used to hook limbs, disarm weapons, and set up takedowns.



> As Conrad Bui (right) raises his knife, Jared Wihongi chambers his tomahawk on his left side to intercept and hook the attack out of the way. He then traps his opponent's arm and gets his point across.



STABBING WITH THE BUTT (SPIKE)

If the dynamics of your environment or position are such that your full-force primary edge strike leaves you with your arm extended downward in a seemingly vulnerable position at extremely close quarters, rip your arm back to its starting position using the butt of the weapon offensively or counter-offensively. Depending on the type of tomahawk you have, there's a lot of potential to inflict heavy damage with this technique. Butt-end hooking tactics could also be employed as discussed with primary edge hooking.

CRUSHING WITH THE POMMEL

If the combative encounter evolves into extremely close quarters, or even into a clinch position, the pommel of the tomahawk can be used to deliver devastating crushing blows to your assailant's skull. Some tomahawks are even designed with this tactic in mind, with pointed pommels integrated into the handle.

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

With regards to weapons-based combatives, it's critically important to develop the principles of speed,

✓ Depending on your position, countering with the 'hawk's butt-end could end a fight quickly.





power, timing, precision, footwork, and distance awareness among other combative attributes. These principles were hammered into me by my primary instructor, Grandmaster Leo Tortal Gaje Jr., and over the years I've come to understand the vital importance of these principles. In the end, these attributes will often decide how well you'll be able to apply your techniques and tactics, and these attributes take training to

develop. Each of us is born with varying degrees of these warrior athletic attributes, and each of us is capable of enhancing these natural attributes through training. Techniques without these attributes will be hard to pull off in the real world, and they can be harnessed into competent fighting skills with sound techniques and training.

If possible, seek the guidance of a good instructor — there are a lot out

there...and a lot of bad ones, too, so be careful. Much of it comes down to the experience, knowledge, and coaching skills of the instructor, and not always the system they teach. Those seeking skills in weapons-based arts often gravitate toward the Filipino martial arts. Either way you look at it, the tomahawk has been a favorite weapon and tool of warriors for centuries, and should be a staple part of your tactical kit also. **R**



< A tomahawk makes a pretty good hammer, too.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jared Wihongi is the founder and president of Survival Edge Tactical Systems Inc., a training and consulting company. He specializes in close-quarter combatives, fully integrating empty hands, contact weapons, and firearms in his programs. As one of a handful of tuhon-level (master) instructors of the Filipino martial art of Pekiti-Tirsia Kali, he conducts multiple seminars worldwide every year, serves as chairman of the Pekiti Tirsia Tactical Association, and is the spokesperson and tactical product consultant for Browning's Black Label tactical equipment line.

His 15 years of law enforcement experience as a patrol officer, SWAT team member, and firearms/defensive tactics instructor have heavily influenced his training and consulting programs. Plus, for the past decade, he's served as a contractor for U.S. special and covert operation units, teaching his Tri-Angle Combatives (TRICOM) and Sole Operator Survival (SOS) programs.

➔ www.jaredwihongi.com

➔ www.survivaledge.com



CHOPPED

A TACTICAL TOMAHAWK BUYER'S GUIDE

BY PATRICK VUONG

Forget everything you think you know about tomahawks. Disregard those centuries-old paintings of Native Indians using them to scalp Europeans. Ignore the critics who say it's nothing more than an ancient tool that only belongs in display cases.

Tomahawks are back, and they're more badass than ever before.

If all you know about this versatile and powerful tool is what you saw in *The Last of the Mohicans*, find that familiar ass-groove in your couch and take the time to peruse this primer on tomahawks. We're certain at least one of these can be a solid supplement to your kit.



'HAWK HISTORY

In the United States, people are probably most familiar with tomahawks as the weapon of choice for American Indians of the Old West, thanks to their depictions in pop culture. Derived from the Algonquian word *tamahaac* (which translates roughly as “to cut off by tool”), the tomahawk was indeed used as a deadly projectile, a fast-moving edged weapon, and a multipurpose utility tool. Sometimes, a 'hawk was outfitted with a pipe and used ceremonially or as a commodity when trading. What about that whole bit about Indians using tomahawks to scalp their enemies? Probably just conjecture, experts say. After all, that's what knives were for.

Another myth: Tomahawks are unique to North America. The truth is variations of this weapon have been wielded by many cultures throughout time (e.g. the Malay silat practitioners of Southeast Asia, the Maori warriors of New Zealand, and the Sudanic cavalry in Western Africa, just to name a few).

The tomahawk reemerged in the 1960s when roughly 4,000 models of this specialized axe were issued to U.S. soldiers and Marines in the Vietnam War. Then for a while it was no longer the flavor of the month — until the Global War on Terror made it a delicious tactical addition once again. After the Sept. 11 terror attacks, certain special-operation-forces units found themselves in need of a rescue tool, a breaching implement, and a backup weapon for close-quarter combat. Re-enter the tomahawk. Evolved for today's purposes with quality materials made with state-of-the-art manufacturing processes, and — whack! — the weapon made its tactical comeback. In all black, of course (because nothing's tactical unless it's black.)

FORM AND FUNCTION

Generally, a tomahawk is a one-handed tool that's shorter than 24 inches and designed for combat, unlike the longer axe that requires two hands and is meant for chopping wood. This makes the 'hawk lighter and faster to unleash (when throwing) or to strike and retract (when fighting up close and personal). And unlike a hatchet, the 'hawk isn't a shrunken-down version of an axe — a tomahawk

usually has a spike or hammer opposite its cutting edge, and some of the fancier handles have a claw or wedge at the end for prying or chiseling.

Of course, these are broad generalizations, and there's nothing that says one can't use a hatchet for fighting or an axe for throwing.

The ancient tomahawk consisted of an axe head (made of stone, bone, or antlers) lashed to a tree branch. It eventually became more refined and, after Europeans introduced metal axe heads to the New World, became decidedly sharper and more durable. Nowadays, you can find them made of all sorts of steel, supplemented with different kinds of handle scales, and sometimes even decorated with laser etchings.

The tomahawks in this buyer's guide are just a small sampling of the many amazing models available on the market today. Using our unscientific yet practical testing methods (we chopped firewood and threw them at pine tree logs before slicing copy paper), we put each 'hawk through its paces to find out which would be most applicable for our uses. If you read on, there's no doubt you'll find at least one of our test subjects will satiate the wants of your inner warrior.



FOR MORE
411

If you're wondering how the hell you should use a tomahawk, see “More Than Chopping” on page 100 by Jared Wihongi, a combatives expert with considerable experience in Filipino martial arts and in the use of the Maorian tomahawk called the *patiti*.



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BAWIDAMANN BLADES RAGNAROK 12

BENCHMADE KNIFE COMPANY 172BKF



OAL:
12 inches
MATERIAL:
4140 chromoly steel
WEIGHT:
1 pound, 4 ounces
MSRP:
\$550
URL:
www.bawidamann.com

411:
Bawidamann Blades has a reputation for blending hardcore materials with visually striking designs. RMJ Tactical stands out as an industry leader in tactical tomahawk construction. When these two companies

get it on, they give birth to an elite level of offspring: The Ragnarok 12 shares some DNA with RMJ's Kestrel, but is slightly shorter and lighter, featuring the art deco/Viking style that's a Bawidamann trademark. Made in the USA. Available in a 14-inch version and various colors.

PROS:

- » Lightweight, sharp, and robust, it'll make short work of doors, trees, and zombies alike.
- » Comes with a high-quality Boltaron sheath that's both durable and easy to use.
- » Paracord lanyard prevents the handle from slipping out of your hands.
- » Easily the most gorgeous 'hawk of the kettle we reviewed.

CONS:

- » It costs as much as a Glock — but you definitely get what you pay for.
- » The cutting edges on the axe head's beard (bottom) and on the spike extend to the handle, preventing you from choking up your grip for certain uses.

OAL:
16.25 inches
MATERIAL:
4140 chromoly steel
WEIGHT:
2 pounds, 4.8 ounces
MSRP:
\$385
URL:
www.benchmade.com

411:
This bad boy has been available for a few years now and has been a proven player in the resurrected tomahawk market. It combines the look of a traditional 'hawk with modern quality materials and various tactical uses — its spike and wedged end allows for prying, digging, door breaching, and many other uses. Plus, it comes with a riveted PIM sheath that allows for multiple carry options. Made in the USA.

PROS:

- » Those looking to keep a certain distance will find that it's a suitable length: not too cumbersome in close quarters, but not so short that you'd have to get in kissing range to do damage.
- » Cross-hatched pattern on G-10 scales provide an assured grip.
- » One-piece forged construction ensures long-term durability.
- » Claw on the handle's end is great for prying nails, boards, etc.

CONS:

- » Sheath was loose, leading to retention problems.
- » The cutting edge (or face) and spike are disappointingly dull (time to bust out the sharpener).
- » Availability is limited and MSRP is steep, but you should be able to search online and find it for much cheaper.





WWW.BRAVOCONCEALMENT.COM



BROWNING BLACK LABEL SHOCK N' AWE TOMAHAWK

COLUMBIA RIVER KNIFE & TOOL CHOGAN T-HAWK



OAL:
10.5 inches

MATERIAL:
1055 tool steel

WEIGHT:
1 pound, 7 ounces

MSRP:
\$98

URL:
www.browning.com

PROS:

- » Its compact design is ideal for those who operate in tight spaces or need to stow their gear in a car or a go-bag.
- » The full-tang 1055 tool steel holds up to repeated abuse (though you'll need to clean it to prevent corrosion)
- » For less than a Benjamin (street price is closer to \$75), you get solid bang for your buck.
- » Face is sharp and easy to sharpen.

CONS:

- » Its main benefit (short length) can be a turnoff if your task at hand requires more leverage — though Browning promises a longer version that should be available by the time you read this.
- » Paracord-wrapped handle can be a bit slick if your hands are sweaty or wet.

411:
The smallest model in our buyer's guide is by no means the weakest. The Shock N' Awe from Browning's Black Label tactical line comes out of the box sharp, sturdy, and durable. While its aesthetics suggest modern ninja rather than old-school Navajo (thanks to its black powdercoat, Russ Kommer design, angled striking pommel, and paracord-wrapped handle), this 'hawk will work effectively at a basecamp, a crash site, or a dark alley.

OAL:
14 inches

MATERIAL:
SK5 carbon steel

WEIGHT:
1 pound, 8.6 ounces

MSRP:
\$185

URL:
www.crkt.com

411:
This collaboration between CRKT and Ryan M. Johnson of RMJ Tactical (see the Shrike entry in this buyer's guide) gives consumers a production tomahawk with Johnson's innovations for only a quarter of the cost of a hand-forged RMJ model. (We've seen the Chogan sold

online for less than a C-note.) The single-piece design comes with a flat-edge hammer opposite the cutting edge and a Kydex sheath with MOLLE clip platform.

PROS:

- » Ergonomic handle features grip choils that provide your hand solid purchase, whether you're holding it at the bottom for a power swing or need to choke up for more precision work.
- » The axe head's spine and beard also have laser-like edges.
- » Lightweight with near-perfect balance in the hand.

CONS:

- » Suffer from sweaty palms? Working in the rain? Beware. The glass-filled nylon handle scales can be slippery when wet.
- » The beard's sharp edge and the axe head's geometry leaves little room for choking all the way up on the handle.





WWW.SOETACTICALGEAR.COM

GERBER
DOWNRANGE TOMAHAWK

OAL:
19.2 inches
MATERIAL:
420HC stainless steel
WEIGHT:
2 pounds, 1 ounce
MSRP:
\$285
URL:
www.gerbergear.com

411:
Assembled in the USA, this Gerber model was made to capitalize on the tomahawk's multipurpose nature. In addition to the cutting edge/hammer at the top, there's a substantial pry bar at the end of its handle. Already highly corrosion resistant, the full-tang 420HC steel body has a Cerakote treatment for added protection. Ideal for military personnel or first-responders.

PROS:

- » When using it as a pry bar, you can grip the cut-away handle in the axe head for greater leverage.
- » As the longest tomahawk, it gives you the most leverage and momentum while swinging.
- » It has that sexy "tactical" look.

CONS:

- » The design seems to favor prying over chopping (e.g. the G-10 scales don't extend all the way down the body, resulting in an off-balanced, awkward swing when going full power).
- » The grooves in the G-10 handles are too jagged, causing hotspots on our palms (even a little pain) after extended use.
- » Though MOLLE compatible, the two-piece sheath prevents quick access.
- » For the price, we'd expect better steel than 420HC.

RMJ TACTICAL
SHRIKE TOMAHAWK

OAL:
15.5 inches
MATERIAL:
4140 chromoly steel
WEIGHT:
1 pound, 10.9 ounces
MSRP:
\$425
URL:
www.rmjtactical.com

411:
RMJ Tactical is one of the companies instrumental in the tactical tomahawk revival of recent years. As one would expect of a bestseller from an industry leader, the Shrike strikes a

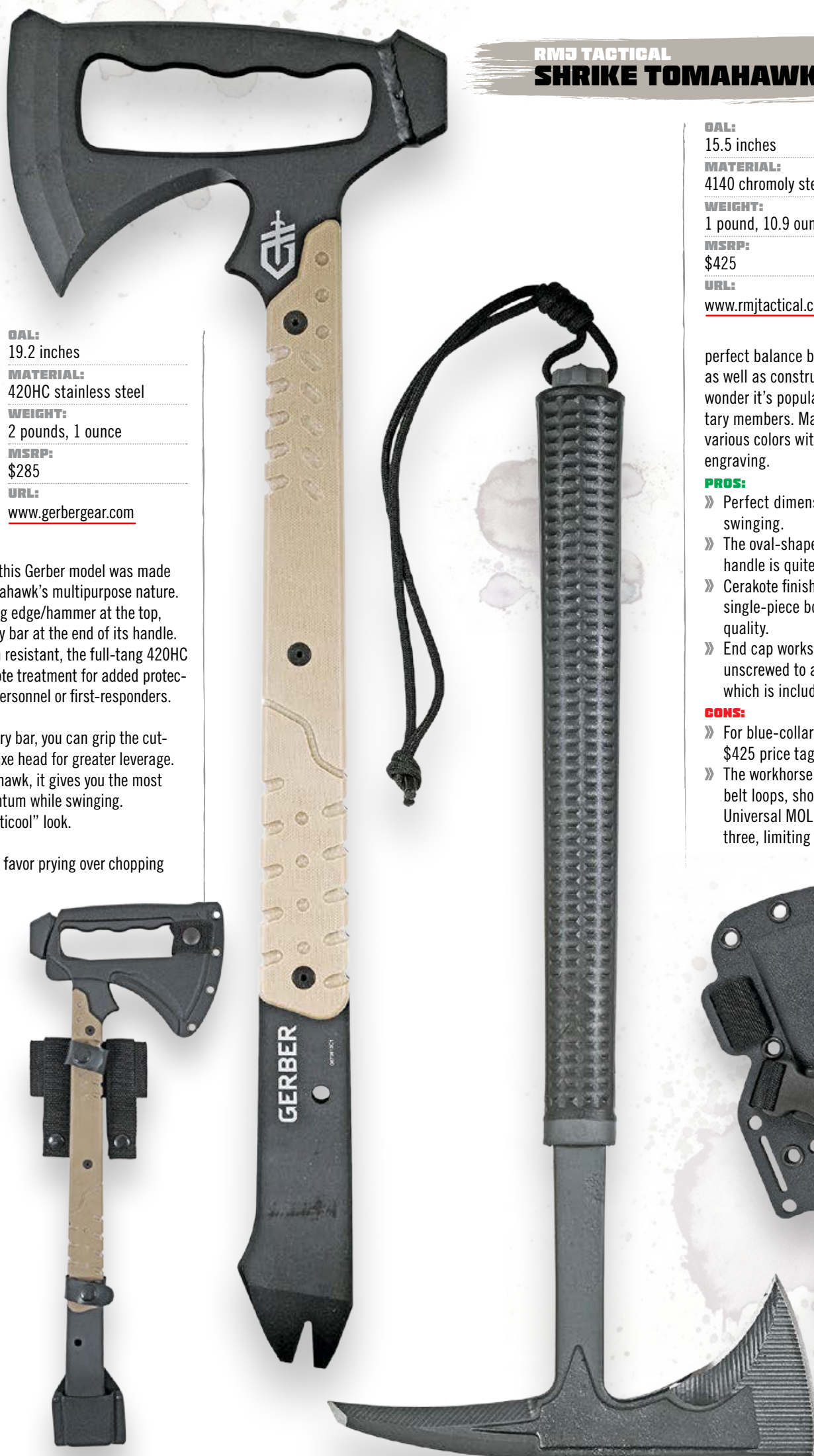
perfect balance between form and function, as well as construction and durability. No wonder it's popular among certain elite military members. Made in the USA. Available in various colors with the option of a custom engraving.

PROS:

- » Perfect dimensions for throwing or swinging.
- » The oval-shaped rubber over-mold on the handle is quite comfortable.
- » Cerakote finish, hammer-forged steel, and single-piece body means tough-as-nails quality.
- » End cap works as a pommel and can be unscrewed to access a sharpening stone, which is included.

CONS:

- » For blue-collar journalists like us, the \$425 price tag ain't no trifling matter.
- » The workhorse Kydex sheath comes with belt loops, shoulder strap, or the Rigid Universal MOLLE Platform — but not all three, limiting your carry options.





UNCLE SAM MEETS MOTHER RUSSIA



magpul.com

SOG SPECIALTY KNIVES & TOOLS

VOODOO HAWK



OAL:
12.56 inches

MATERIAL:
3Cr13 and glass-reinforced nylon

WEIGHT:
1 pound, 12 ounces

MSRP:
\$75

URL:
www.sogknives.com

411:
SOG created this stout little guy by combining its FastHawk and Tactical Tomahawk models, resulting in a hybrid that's agile and lightweight. An extended cutting head provides plenty of hand clearance while a spike and a metal pommel offer piercing and blunt-force

options, respectively. (For SOG fanatics or those who want a slightly smaller version, SOG also has the Voodoo Hawk Mini in black and satin.)

PROS:

- » Lightweight and well balanced.
- » Design allows for a comfortable grip anywhere along the handle, whether you're leading with the face or the spike.
- » In a world where the best tomahawks are half a grand, the Voodoo Hawk's \$75 MSRP seems quite affordable for proletariats like us.

CONS:

- » Cheaper price tag means cheapo materials: The Chinese-made 3Cr13 steel has poor edge retention, and the glass-reinforced nylon handle doesn't compare to a solid steel body.
- » It's not a one-piece — the steel axe head and pommel are screwed onto the handle, meaning failure is possible during heavy-duty use.
- » Made almost as an afterthought, the ballistic nylon sheath is inconvenient and won't last long.

TOPS KNIVES

IDT AXE

OAL:
15 inches

MATERIAL:
1095 tool steel and 4130 chromoly steel

WEIGHT:
1 pound, 14 ounces

MSRP:
\$220

URL:
www.topsknives.com

411:

Its name stands for "Individual Demolition Tool." No, that's not a euphemism for your moronic friend who manages to accidentally break everything he touches. It's in reference to the IDT Axe's primary purpose: to help you make an emergency entry (or exit). It's ideal for first-responders, military door-kickers, and camping enthusiasts. The IDT also comes with a paracord lanyard and a foam grip over the chromoly-tube handle for a non-slip grip and some shock absorption. Designed and handcrafted in the USA.

PROS:

- » Face and spike can do some serious damage.
- » Forward-heavy head enhances chopping power.
- » TOPS's Black Traction Coating adds both protection and the tactical aesthetic.

CONS:

- » While the IDT holds up in our initial testing, we're surprised that it's comprised of two pieces rather than being a single body.
- » Unlike most of the other 'hawks, the bottom of the handle doesn't have a prying claw or striking pommel and is actually hollow.
- » The ballistic nylon sheath is poorly conceived and fits about as well as an XL T-shirt would on Kevin Hart.





TacticalWalls.com/recoil

LIBERTY SUPPRESSORS' MYSTIC

THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE OF CANS

BY IAIN HARRISON
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

One of the most daunting tasks facing anyone who wants to enter the world of NFA goodies is picking that all-important first suppressor. While there's an excellent case to be made that one should bust one's cherry on a decent .22 rimfire can, the Mystic X is one of the most versatile silencers currently available — just about any caliber you can run through an AR-15 can be suppressed by this unit. Although it's quite a step up in terms of purchase price, the ability to be employed on centerfire rifles, handguns — and yes, .22 LR guns — makes it worthy of your consideration.



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CONSTRUCTION

Employing a stainless-steel mono-core baffle stack, the Mystic X can be fairly easily disassembled for cleaning. While this is no real advantage in a dedicated rifle can, .22 rimfire (and to a lesser extent, 9mm) is notoriously filthy and will bung up a suppressor in no time if left to its own devices. In order to prevent the tube from filling up with caked-on lead cack, it's necessary to clean the baffles

MAKE:
Liberty Suppressors

MODEL:
Mystic X

CALIBER:
9mm and smaller

LENGTH:
8 inches

DIAMETER:
1.375 inches

WEIGHT:
10.5 ounces

MSRP:
\$799, plus \$95-\$155
for adapter

URL:
libertycans.net

NOTES:
Full-auto rated for
the following calibers:
.22 LR, 4.6x30mm,
5.7x28mm, 9x18mm,
9x19mm, .300 BLK
subsonic (8-inch bar-
rel), .380, 7.62x25mm

periodically — next to impossible in welded-core designs. To clean the Mystic X, the user simply unscrews the caliber adaptor and lock ring, then pushes the core out of the titanium outer tube. Once free, it can then be scrubbed, blasted, or dipped in an ultrasonic tank.

A variety of adapters are available in order to convert the suppressor to attach to numerous firearms in your safe. Ours arrived with $\frac{5}{8}$ -24 and $\frac{1}{2}$ -28 fixed barrel adapters, as well as a pistol adapter equipped with a Nielsen device to permit functioning on locked breech, recoil-operated handguns. We lost no time in screwing it onto as many guns as we could in order to test the manufacturer's versatility claims, although we didn't manage to try it out on every one of the 60 calibers it's rated for. Which is an excellent reason to buy more guns.

GOING HOT

Weighing in at just shy of 11 ounces without an adapter, the lack of thermal mass is quickly noticed after firing a few rounds of full-power rifle ammo — this can heats up quickly. It's a good idea to check any direct-threaded suppressor after five or six rounds to make sure it hasn't started to shoot loose. When we did, the Mystic X was pretty

toasty. Unlike a dedicated 5.56mm suppressor such as AAC's benchmark M4-2000, this unit doesn't have an inconel blast baffle to take the hit from emerging gasses. So the Mystic X is limited to longer barrels and a slower rate of fire (except those listed in the specs) — screw it onto your 10-inch SBR and the unburned powder emerging at 12,000 psi will erode it in short order, but follow the manufacturer's instructions and it'll last a long time.

Compared to some other cans, it's pretty long, but the upside to this is greater internal volume, hence better noise dampening. On our Brethren Armament MP5 clone, it's stupid quiet with 147-grain subsonic ammo. In .22 LR, despite the big gap between the projectile and baffle stack, it's at least as quiet as a dedicated .22 muffler, even if it does look a little out of place on a Ruger 10/22.

Our only niggles were that after a while, disassembly becomes something of a chore due to carbon buildup. We had to heat up the adapter with a blowtorch in order to break it free, and the lock ring needed more of the same, plus the gentle ministrations of a set of Vise-Grips. Apart from that, it lives up to the manufacturer's claim and is one of the most versatile suppressors currently on the market. **R**



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GLOCK: DECLASSIFIED

RECOIL REVEALS AN EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK AT THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE HANDGUN MANUFACTURER'S U.S. BRANCH

BY DAVID REEDER

ISSUE 18

126

RECOILWEB.COM

It's almost ironic — the amount of effort, forethought, and advanced technology that goes into the construction of a weapon as rugged and simply designed as the Glock handgun.

That's perhaps the most striking takeaway from a tour of the Glock USA Inc. manufacturing facility, not to mention the comprehensive quality control measures (as much as 20 percent of the effort in each stage of the gun's build is dedicated to Q.C.). How else do you build a million guns a year with consistent reliability and performance?

The manufacturing processes, inspection procedures, and inner workings of the Smyrna, Georgia-based facility are extraordinary — of course, that could be taken as an anemic description or hyperbole depending on your background and perspective. Now that we've



been allowed a peek behind the curtain (if you'll forgive the mixed metaphors), we'll tell you what we learned during a recent visit — and you be the judge of how impressive it is.

Glock, both Gaston Glock himself and the company that bears his name, have a longstanding reputation for privacy and secrecy. It has, not without justification, been described as insular and unforthcoming. Such a policy has become, by its own admission, a less-than-ideal approach. Its recent effort to be more proactive and accessible is both timely and smart — the company's making what could be the single most significant U.S. product release since its inception in the form of the G43 (see page 20 for our initial hands-on review). What little press is out there lately has little to do with

their product releases, their charitable works, or their contributions to various pro-Second Amendment efforts. Instead, it's almost all sensational and tabloid-esque rumor mongering about the founder and his family proper — though what any of that theater has to do with the reliability and performance of the handgun we have no idea.

Regardless of motivation, the invitation to visit and see how Glock does things was very welcome and damned informative.

CONFIDENTLY CONSISTENT

Regardless of one's personal preference in pistols, even most detractors can acknowledge Glock's long-established reputation for reliability. This is in no small part why Glock's advertising in recent months has been

centered on the word “confidence.”

Josh Dorsey, the frank and affable vice president of Glock USA, describes it thusly: “The genius of Mr. Glock, first of all, is the simplicity of the design of the pistol. But the other thing...that isn’t really discussed a lot is how you can, with a high degree of certainty, replicate those parts over and over again with that tight tolerance...mass producing a product with complete interchangeability. That gives you confidence; confidence to succeed and survive in a bad situation.”

The way Glock controls manufacturing processes to ensure consistency, with redundant layers of quality assurance, has another benefit: it keeps cost down, one reason that the price of their handguns has not increased in years.

That manufacturing process begins with the raw materials, explains Dr.

Michael Jacquorie, an animated and engaging senior Glock executive and engineer whose focus is on operations and strategy. Every lot of steel used in Glock USA’s manufacturing goes through a qualification process in Austria to ensure that specifications are being met. It’s looked at by a metallurgical laboratory in Austria, then checked again in a series of additional steps in Smyrna (a suburb of Atlanta) by specialists on site to make sure nothing changed or happened to the steel in transit.

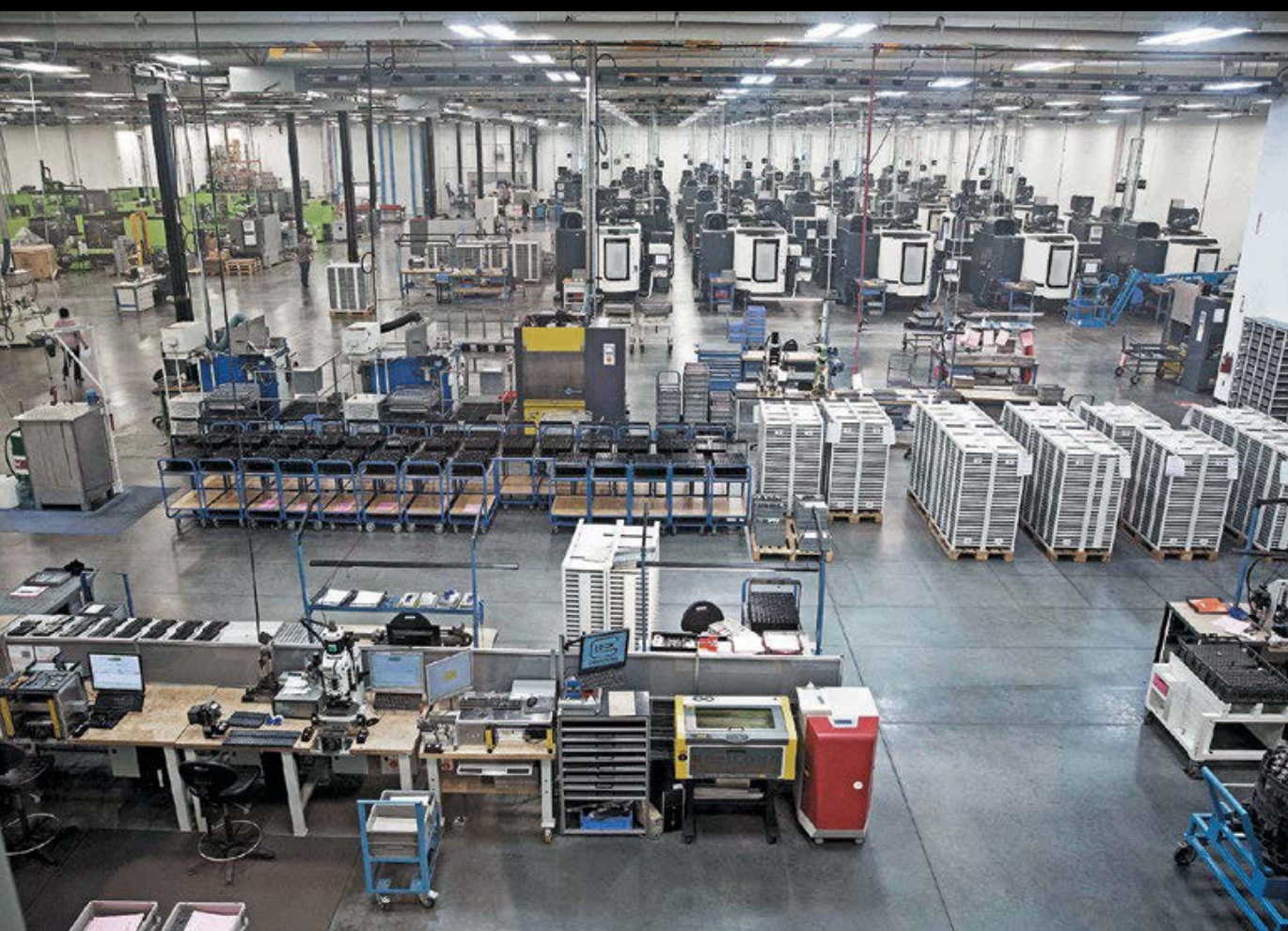
“We have two specifically qualified steel vendors,” Jacquorie says. “From those vendors we get specific steel lots that are made to our specification, solely for us. This is patented. It is prequalified in Austria, and then the qualification is followed through again here, so the whole process,



where the steel goes, follows specific qualification.”

The process by which a vendor becomes certified to supply steel to Glock takes two to three painstaking years.

Interestingly, all of the machinery in Glock USA is organized and arranged exactly the same as in the Austrian locations. Programs, interfaces, even the way materials are staged near the machines are identical. They run both 110- and 220-volt electrical systems at the Georgia plant, so there is full interchangeability with their European counterparts. An Austrian machine operator could be transplanted to the USA, or vice versa, Jacquorie says, and would notice no difference. This is part of their effort to ensure that the quality of any Austrian-built Glock and U.S.-built Glock are exactly the same.



All programs, fixtures, and tools (like drills or end mills) are locally developed or built, helping them reach what Jacquorie describes as the full potential of their machines. Similar care is taken when it comes to their internal testing area. The lab facility located adjacent to the manufacturing area is built to maintain consistent humidity, temperature, and vibration levels, all of which can affect the quality of measurement. In fact, the lab is built on a separate slab with its own foundation, so that not even the vibration of the machines in the manufacturing area can impact the reproducible accuracy of their Q.C. measurements.



TRACK BACK

Although Jacquorie's official position is senior executive vice president, it's the German Ph.D. in mechanical engineering and master's degree in physics you're hearing when he begins to enthusiastically describe the actual manufacturing process. In many ways, it was like listening to SureFire's Dr. Hawk wax effusive about optics. Not only do you quickly realize just how much you don't know, you're rapidly drawn into a discussion that could go on at far greater length than either one of you have time for. (You can read more about forging, milling, and other parts of each gun's construction online at RECOILweb.com).

Once guns are assembled and inspected, they are moved by lots of

100 on a cart into the various bays of the indoor range for testing. There, the weapons are test fired multiple times with a mechanism similar to a Ransom rest on steroids. The results are annotated and then the weapons secured. Walking through that area while all bays are in use is like being at a police department qualification with a relay that never seems to let up — the firing is virtually non-stop. The machine operators are obviously well practiced, mounting, testing, and returning each weapon in less than 30 seconds.

Cameras record the shot group against an electronic target and note if they need to adjust the sights to make sure the weapon's point of aim equals its point of impact. All of this is done sequentially and in serialized fashion, so each individual weapon is on record for future review. If someone were to come back and say, "Hey this gun doesn't work," Glock can go back and validate it with the original group it fired during testing, the number of rounds it fired, who was operating the machine, and what day and time the testing occurred, and reply, "It worked when it left here." If need be, the company can go further back.

Slides and frames are both serialized, and there are additional less obvious identification measures in place. In fact, tracking during the manufacturing process is so closely controlled that they can go as far back as to identify which batch of steel was used in a particular pistol's manufacture and when it was shipped over from Austria.

Once inspected again, the weapons are packaged (with an envelope containing two of the rounds fired while proofing it) and shipped out.

THE FUTURE OF GLOCK

What's next? 2013 and 2014 were the company's best years yet. Can they continue the trend? 2015 is starting strong. January saw the introduction



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BY THE NUMBERS

The recent expansion of Glock USA's manufacturing facility in Smyrna, Georgia, is just the most recent evidence of growth. Since 2008, it's doubled in size, adding some 200 jobs for a total of 405. Just the manufacturing area alone now covers 73,000 square feet. This does not include offices, training areas, and related facilities housing Glock staff. Signs of ongoing construction are common, and temporary buildings have been installed. Glock has purchased an additional 5 wooded acres surrounding the location in preparation for further expansion in the future. Here's a look at its current stats:

3

The number of manufacturing facilities building Glock pistols (two in Austria, one in the USA)

65

The estimated percentage of law enforcement agencies now using Glock handguns

90

The percentage of Georgia law enforcement agencies using Glock handguns

400

The number of Glock USA employees working at the Smyrna site

1,000

The number of Glock employees working in Europe

1 million

The average number of handguns Glock manufactures each year

10 million

The approximate number of Glocks in use in the world today

2

The number of new Glock 43 pistols the author arranged to purchase after test-firing the weapon

GLOCK: DECLASSIFIED



of the Glock MOS (Modular Optic System), the G40 Gen4 10mm handgun in MOS configuration — and of course we're reporting in this very issue about the brand new Glock 43 single-stack 9mm. What else do they have in prototype? What's cooking back in R&D?

We asked the question of VP Josh Dorsey directly — specifically, about the full-size single-stack handguns and the Glock carbine. How soon will we see the latter? Are there plans for the former?

The laconic former Marine infantry and reconnaissance officer smiles wryly.

"It will be ready when it's ready," he says. "Everything we do has to live up to Mr. Glock's direction to pursue perfection in everything we do. There has to be agreement the pistol is ready for the market. Single stacks? That's to be determined. Those questions have not yet been completely unanswered, but we're looking [at them]."

He leans forward in his chair. His expression is as earnest and serious as it's been since the day began. He explains further: "Our focus is on those

who go in harm's way, but...all of our customers are important to us. We hear you, we're listening to you. We're developing a cycle, organizing and staffing ourselves to be able to respond faster to the needs of the customer. It is our intent to keep going. We're not going to slow down. If you stay static you're gonna dry up and blow away. Everybody catches up to you. How many polymer-frame pistols are on the market now? It's the old Marine saying from Tarawa: Keep moving. We gotta keep moving to stay relevant. [There is] lots of work and activity being done, lots of prototypes...lots to come."

It will be hard to improve on Glock USA's manufacturing processes; harder still to top the release of the long-awaited Glock 43. They'll strive to do both. Meantime they'll continue a tradition of philanthropy, of community involvement at the city, county, and state levels, and of building reliable tools for LEOs, the military, and responsible armed civilians.

Be confident of it. **R**



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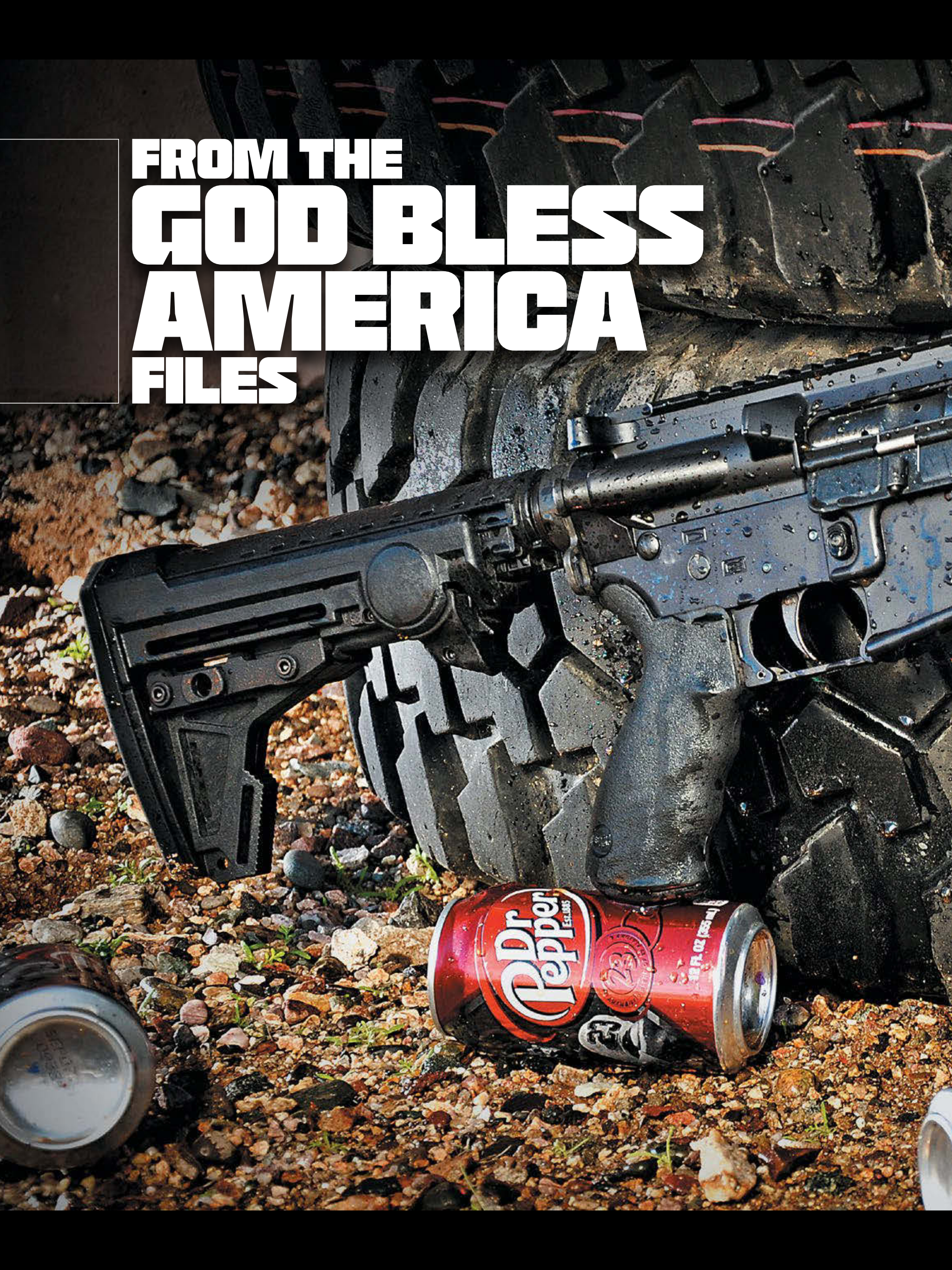


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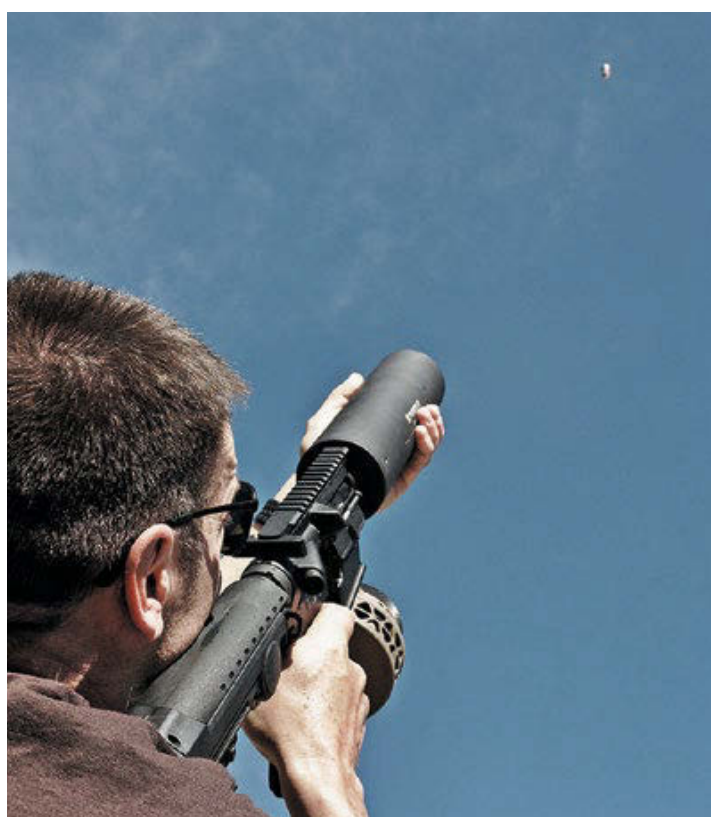
X PRODUCTS CAN CANNON – BARKINGLY MAD AND TONS OF FUN

BY IAIN HARRISON
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

If you've ever wondered just what to get that hard-to-buy-for gun nut for a gift-giving occasion, might we humbly suggest you consider this particular bit of moonbattery. One day, someone woke up and said, "You know what? I want to hurl a soda can the length of a football field, and all I have is an AR-15 and a short length of sewer pipe," then spent the next five minutes scratching themselves and muttering darkly about burst pressures and projectile weights. The fruits of their (possibly frosty-beverage fueled) cogitation burst forth like a scampering critter from John Hurt's chest cavity and behold! The Can Cannon.

Powered by a Mil-spec, blank 5.56mm cartridge, the device consists of a smoothbore outer tube, within which lurks a short length of

barrel blank that is mated to a regular barrel extension. The barrel has been cross-drilled perpendicular to the bore axis with a series of ports, designed to rapidly bleed off pressure by venting into the outer tube. The end of the barrel is blocked by a set screw, resting against the base of the projectile when loaded. Without the series of ports and the large internal volume into which they divert propellant gasses, the blank round would punch straight through the bottom of the can, and the owner would have to deal with a sticky mess every time they attempted to use it. The rest of the Can Cannon is pretty unremarkable — a standard A3 upper receiver that will mate to any of the ARs that have multiplied like rabbits in your gun safe.



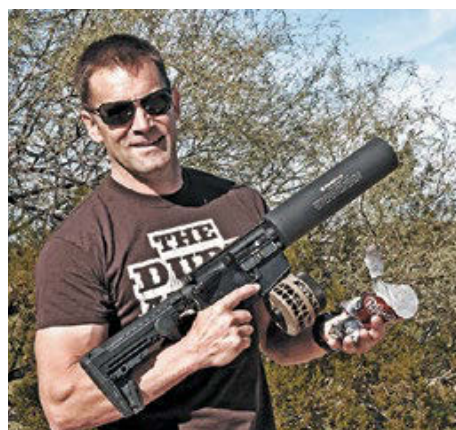
You'll need to pull the bolt and charging handle out of whichever upper you've separated from the trigger mechanism and drop it into the Can Cannon. Once that's done, load up a magazine with blanks, grab a case of delicious, sugary, carbonated garbage, and head to the nearest open space

where you're A) not going to break any laws and B) not going to wind up explaining how a soda can managed to get embedded in anything it's not supposed to, like your buddy's melon. Because you know this thing is going to draw a crowd.

The guys at X Products are quite obviously overgrown juveniles and wasted many hours figuring out what they could shoot out of their brilliant creation. Otherwise why else would the third bullet point in the owner's manual state: "The object must not be flammable, explosive, or living?" Alrighty then, we'll take that as a challenge...

In the spirit of scientific inquiry, we headed afield equipped with not only sodas, but also some suitably dimensioned citrus fruit, aerosol paint cans, and a basket of fluffy kittens. OK, we lied about the last one, and we're aware that spray paint is flammable. But it just looks so damn pretty when you launch it out of the Can Cannon and blast it midair with a shotgun.

The manufacturer warns against using generic soda, as the cans are not as strong — so we played it safe with only the finest carbonated high-fructose corn syrup solutions. Yummy! Held at a 45-degree angle, we had no problems sending a 12-ounce can 100 yards downrange, where it burst with a satisfying spray. In the words of our 43rd president, mission accomplished. **R**



SPEC BOX X PRODUCTS CAN CANNON

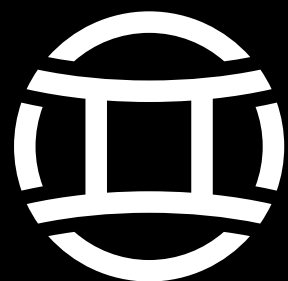


	CALIBER 12-ounce can
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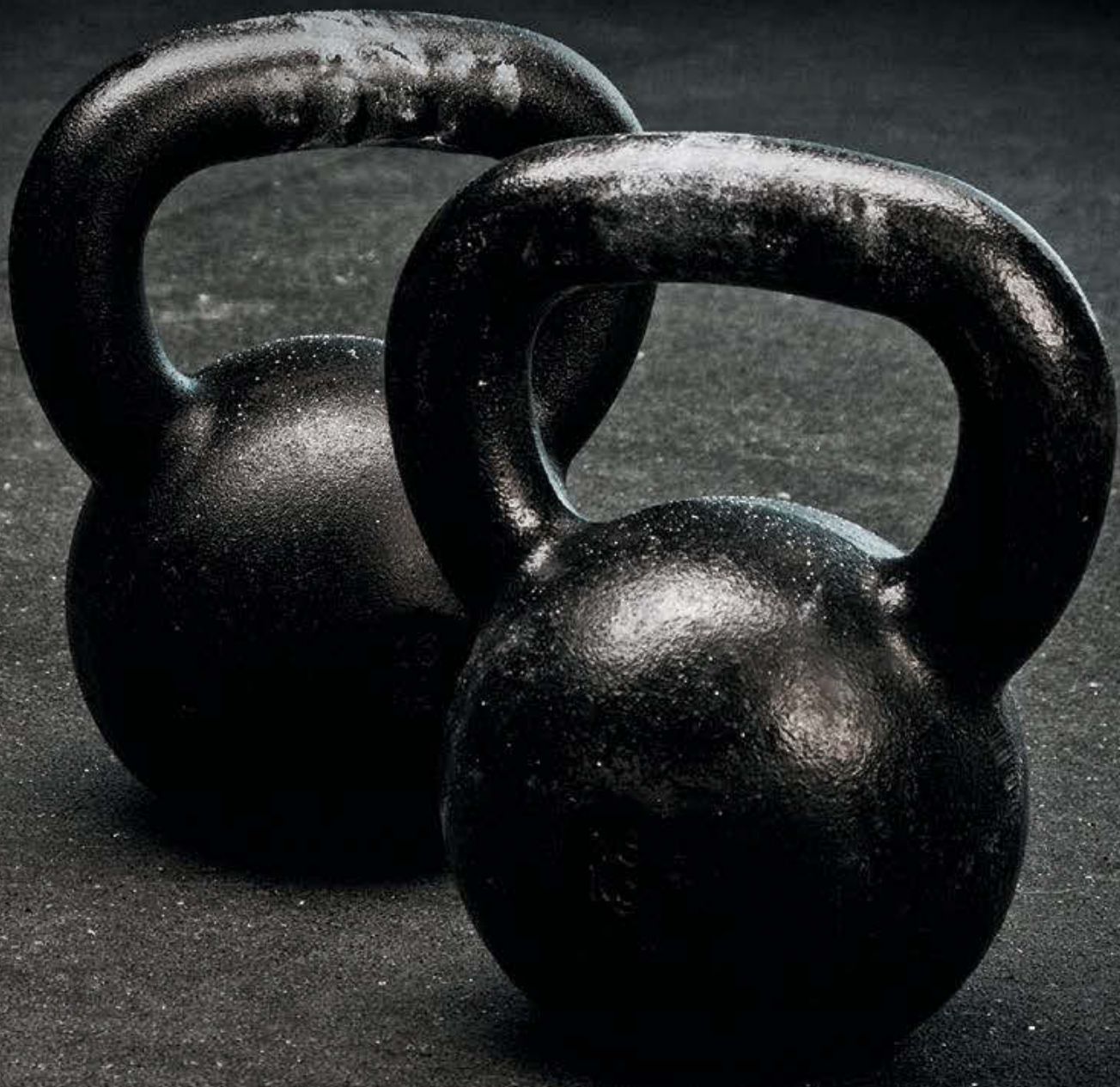
BY RYNE GIOVIANO

This article isn't for those looking to "tone up" — whatever that means. If that's your thing, look elsewhere. We're going to use a great tool to take your shooting to the next level, whether that means tighter groups, better recoil management, or controlling your breathing

between shots. The tool in question is a kettlebell.

Why has it become so popular in recent years? In simplified terms, a kettlebell is just a cannonball with a handle — yet it's a whole gym in your hand. It's versatile enough to help power-lifters

improve their deadlift, while also providing elite-level military operators the ability to build strength and stamina while on deployment. It allows for a range of fitness possibilities, especially if you're looking to improve your shooting ability. Not a believer? You will be.



WARNING!

The exercises and content expressed in this column are for illustrative purposes only. Consult your physician before trying any physical activity or nutritional plan. RECOIL and its contributors are not responsible for any harm or injuries sustained while attempting these techniques.

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KETTLEBELLS VERSUS DUMBBELLS

A dumbbell may be more familiar to you, but kettlebells offer a wide range of exercises because the center of gravity is outside the handle. This allows for more ballistic, swinging movements and other small variations a normal dumbbell wouldn't allow. That being said, a kettlebell can also be used for most exercises that are more commonly associated with a dumbbell.

Kettlebells are typically made of cast iron or steel, similar to dumbbells, and are sometimes coated with paint or rubber below the handle. It's common for kettlebells to go up in much larger increments than dumbbells, though, because they are often measured in *pood*, an antiquated Russian unit of measurement. One *pood* is

about 16 kilograms (or 35 pounds). As kettlebells have gained popularity and are now more mass-produced, it's getting increasingly more common to see them in 5- and 10-pound increments much like dumbbells.

If you're going to get serious and incorporate kettlebell training (and you should), men should start with a 35-pound 'bell, which should run about \$65. Ladies, starting with an 18-pounder would be best; that'll cost about \$40. The versatility of the kettlebell means you're not going to have to spend thousands of dollars on a rack of dumbbells. One, for now, is all you need.

Just like you wouldn't want to train only one weapon platform (ever hit a target with a pistol at 800 yards?), you'll want to use kettlebells in concert

with other tools, like dumbbells or barbells. In this particular instance, however, we're focusing on kettlebells in the context of improving your shooting with some unique exercises for which they work best. They can make you more powerful. They can improve your cardiovascular endurance and fat loss (without using some panty-waist elliptical machine). They'll also improve muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility.

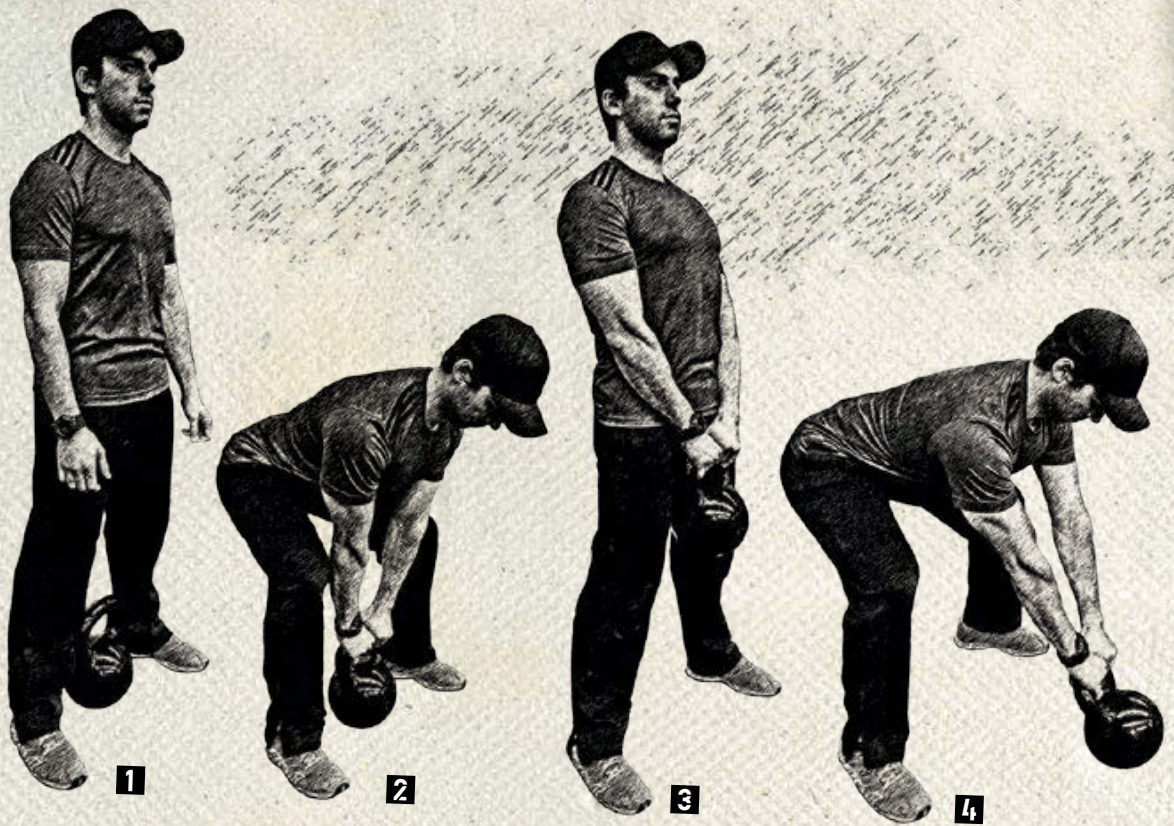
So, what does this all mean for shooting? Think more accurate running and gunning, improved steadiness when shooting, breath control, stamina, and recoil management. Not sold yet? Give the following three exercises a try for four weeks. You'll be convinced. If nothing else, it'll make more of a man (or woman) out of you.

EXERCISE 1 KETTLEBELL SWING

The kettlebell swing is arguably the most popular exercise with this tool, making its way from Jillian Michaels DVDs to CrossFit gyms. It's a phenomenal exercise to build explosive power, endurance, and strength. This exercise has quite a demand on grip strength, is great for improving power and strength in the lower body, and also improves breath control. These are all good things to have when handling a firearm. Very good things.



1. First, show you can move through your hips. Stand two feet in front of a wall.
2. Reach forward with your arms and simultaneously shove your hips back behind you to the wall. Your back should be nice and flat. Go ahead and wiggle your toes to make sure you're on your heels.
3. Drive through your heels, and stand up.



1. We'll now deadlift a kettlebell. Assume the same position as the hip hinge, pushing your hips back behind you.
2. Grasp the kettlebell positioned directly between your feet. Brace your core, and sniff some air in your belly.
3. Drive your heels through the floor, and squeeze your butt.
4. Next, we'll learn to throw the kettlebell backwards. Stand about a foot behind the kettlebell, hip hinge back, and crush the handle.

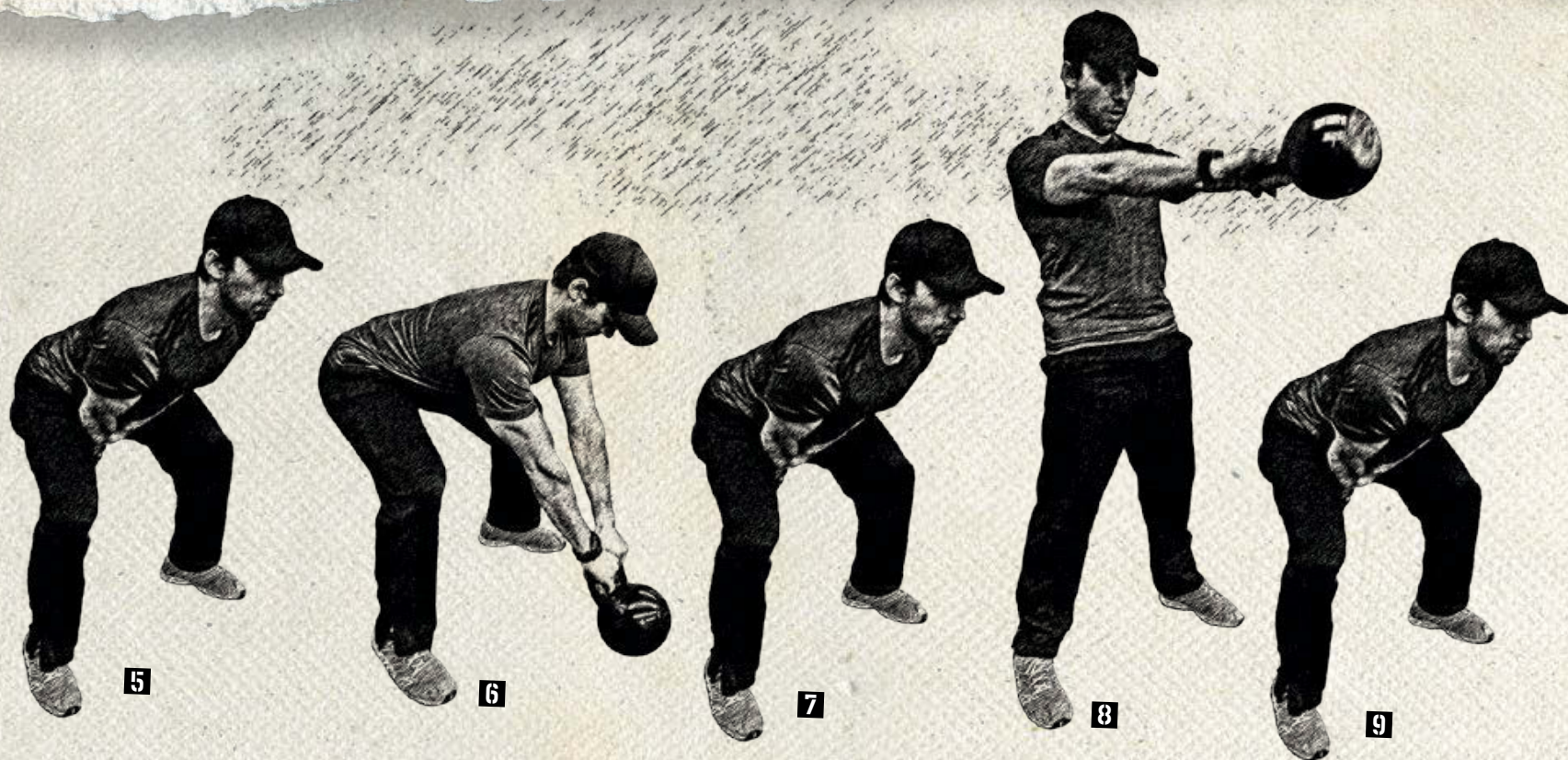
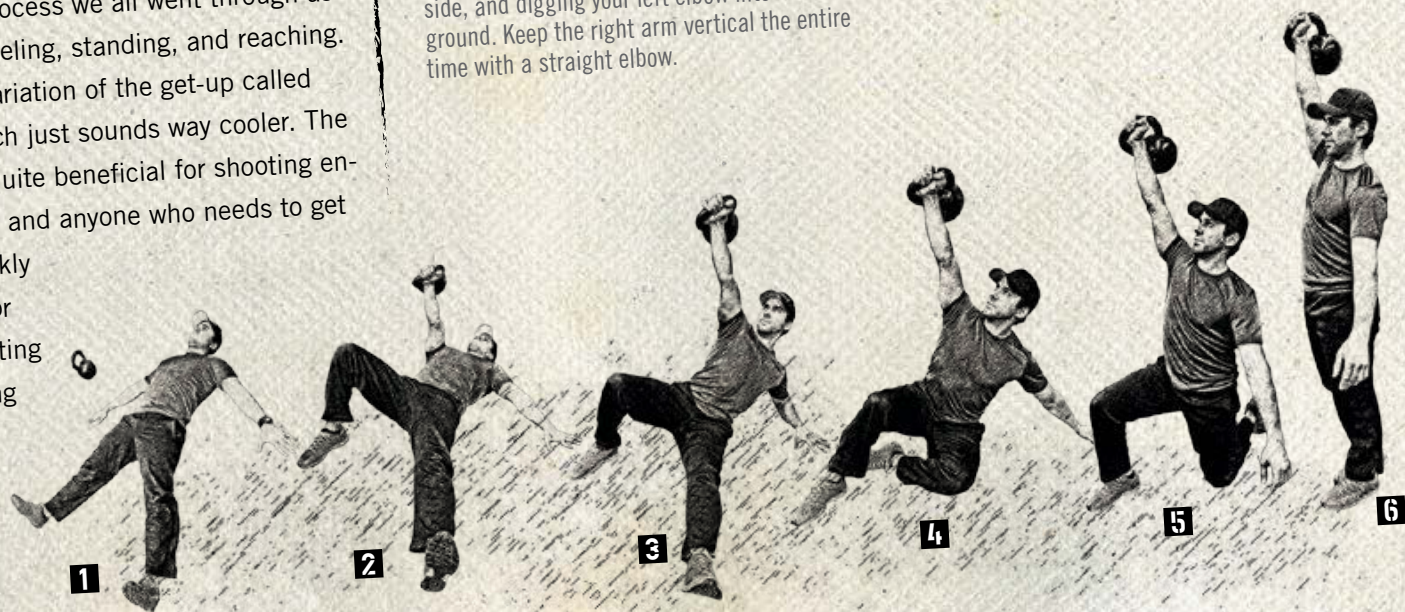
EXERCISE 2 TACTICAL GET-UP

The traditional get-up is a strongman movement that is easily 200 years old, probably older (insert mental image of bulky mustachioed man wearing something resembling a wrestling singlet). It's a ridiculously functional exercise that can work wonders for your entire body by mimicking the process we all went through as infants: lying, rolling, kneeling, standing, and reaching.

We're going to use a variation of the get-up called the Tactical Get-Up, which just sounds way cooler. The Tactical Get-Up can be quite beneficial for shooting enthusiasts, troops, police, and anyone who needs to get up from the ground quickly with a weapon in hand or transition between shooting positions while remaining focused on a target.

1. Begin on your back with your arms and legs at 45 degrees in relation to your body.
2. Next, hold the kettlebell in your right hand straight above your shoulder. Bend your right knee and bring your heel toward your butt with your foot facing out at roughly 45 degrees. Pull your shoulder blades down and together, and fixate your eyes on the kettlebell.
3. Rest on your left elbow by pushing off of your right foot, driving your chest toward the left side, and digging your left elbow into the ground. Keep the right arm vertical the entire time with a straight elbow.

4. Shift your weight from your left elbow to your left hand, screwing your left palm into the ground away from your body as you complete the transition. Bend your left leg so your left foot is below your right knee.
5. Simultaneously push off of your left hand and thrust your hips forward until you can get to one knee. Don't lead the movement with your shoulders. Shift your focus from the kettlebell to the horizon (or straight ahead).
6. Drive your right heel into the floor and stand up.



5. Keeping your heels loaded, "hike" the kettlebell back between your legs like you're a center snapping the pigskin to your quarterback. Aim high, just above your knees — be sure not to wreck your manhood in the process.
6. Return the 'bell to the starting position.

7. Now hike the kettlebell again, but this time...
8. ...Stand up tall and explosively after the bell is hiked back. Exhale hard on the way up. At the top, squeeze your butt, brace your core, and flex your thighs.

9. Sniff some air in, with your core braced, as you pull the kettlebell back between your legs to the hike position. Fixate your eyes 6 to 10 feet in front of you to keep your neck neutral.

EXERCISE 3 KETTLEBELL CRUSH CURL

The kettlebell crush curl is an interesting exercise that can really enhance rifle shooting. We've all seen dumbbell and barbell curls, but how many have seen someone crush a kettlebell between their hands and curl it? It's great for improving grip strength and will help keep your AR close to the body with minimal fatigue. Hell, it may even keep your groups tighter.



1. Begin in a standing position, gripping the cannonball portion of the kettlebell between your hands and your arms straight down in front of you.
2. Actively crush the 'bell between your hands as you curl it up to your chest. Really squeeze your biceps in that position. Come on, squeeze harder than that, you pansy!
3. Bring the kettlebell back down to the starting position under control, while crushing it the whole time.

THE PROGRAM

Complete all sets of the first exercise (with recommended rest in between) before moving to the next exercise. Again, men should start with

a 35-pound kettlebell while woman should begin with an 18-pound 'bell. If you've never lifted any sort of weights before, try an even lighter kettlebell until you're up to speed.

EXERCISE	REPETITIONS	SETS	REST TIME IN BETWEEN EXERCISES
Kettlebell Swing	10	4	30 to 45 seconds
Tactical Get-Up	1 per side	4	30 to 45 seconds
Crush Curl	12	4	30 to 45 seconds

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryne Gioviano is the co-owner of Welligee Personal Training & Lifestyle located in Naperville, Illinois. He holds a master's degree in exercise physiology and is certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

➔ www.welligee.com

QUALITY KETTLEBELLS

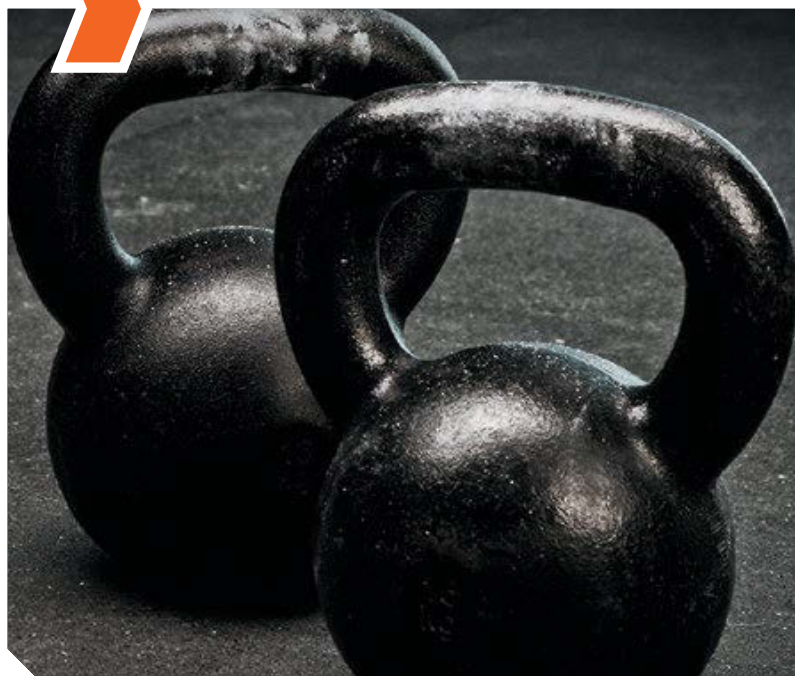
Thanks to the skyrocketing popularity of this type of equipment, there are now many companies making kettlebells. But like firearms, they're not all made equal. It's important to invest in quality. Generally, kettlebells come in two types: steel and cast iron. The following are some brands we've found to offer superior performance.

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- IKFF Kettlebell | www.ikff.com

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- Dragondoor Russian Kettlebell | www.dragondoor.com



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TOURNIQUET 101

A FORMER U.S. AIR FORCE PJ PROVIDES SOME LIFESAVING INSIGHT

BY JOSHUA VANDENBRINK
PHOTOS BY JORGE NUÑEZ

It's perfectly healthy to quickly think about any dangers we might face in our ever-changing society before heading out for the day. *What are the road conditions going to be? Why is that car in my neighborhood? If there is an active shooter at my kid's school today, what is the fastest route there?* We don't dwell on it, but we consider it. Sometimes, in a healthy way, we even play a SHTF situation in our minds to work through the possible outcomes. The ability to consider the matrix of threats and likely responses is what makes humans so adept at survival.

While stationed in Alaska with the Air Force, I loved to mountain-bike through the beautiful wilderness trails — but always contemplated the thing that worried me the most: coming around a corner and broadsiding a huge brown bear with her cubs. I put a bell on my handlebars (mockingly referred to as a “dinner bell” by other pararescuemen) during certain times of the year to give bears advance warning. Regardless of the early warning system, I still had a SHTF plan: I

would pull my knife out and, after a series of ninja rolls, stabs, and upper cuts, that giant bear would get a serious ass-whooping! In this imagined scuffle, the bear gets in one good swipe for two reasons: one, I need the cool scar so that people constantly ask to hear the story, and two, so that everyone would be impressed by my massive threshold for pain.

Regardless of your fantasies and fictional scars, most people should visualize success. The last thing that you want to think when you find yourself in a gun fight is *I didn't expect this*. If you find yourself thinking anything along this line, you should have trained harder and planned better. In a SHTF situation, oftentimes just forcing yourself to say, “I want to be here,” and trusting in your training can change everything for the better. This is especially true when it comes to massive extremity hemorrhaging.

It's largely accepted that a healthy adult can bleed out from a lacerated femoral artery in as little as a minute and a half. When that S hits that F,

there's no time for self doubt evoked by an inability to operate your equipment. You either know how to use your tourniquet (TQ) or you don't. You either prepared for the potential of this moment or you didn't. If you have one injury and no more threats, perhaps you can default to extremely aggressive direct and indirect pressure to manage the wound until someone else arrives that knows how to help. But if there are other people injured or more bears to box, then you need to be able to use your tourniquet effectively, stop the bleeding, and move on to your next task.

So while you're lazily reading this latest issue, grab your TQ out of your range bag, bug-out bag, or running gear, and let's do a quick review. More than likely, your blow-out kit will have one of three brands: the Combat Application Tourniquet, the Special Operations Forces Tactical Tourniquet-Wide, or the Rapid Application Tourniquet System. Each one has its pros and cons, but all three will get the job done — when applied properly.

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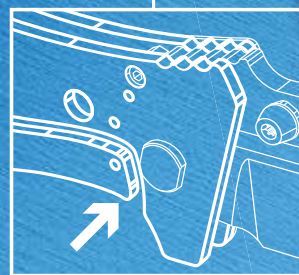
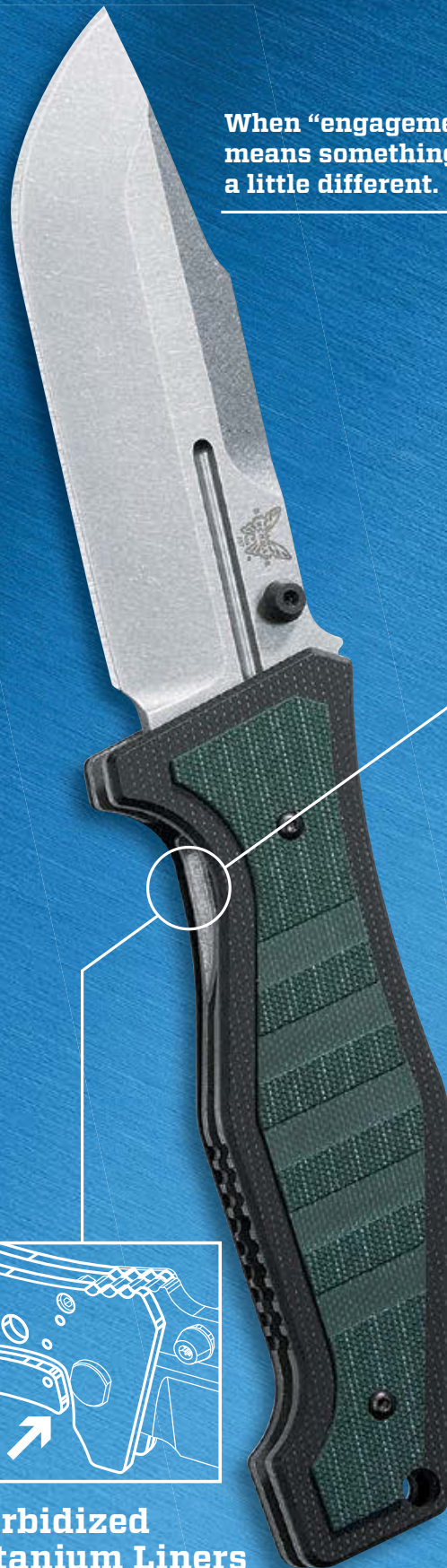


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COMBAT APPLICATION TOURNIQUET (CAT)

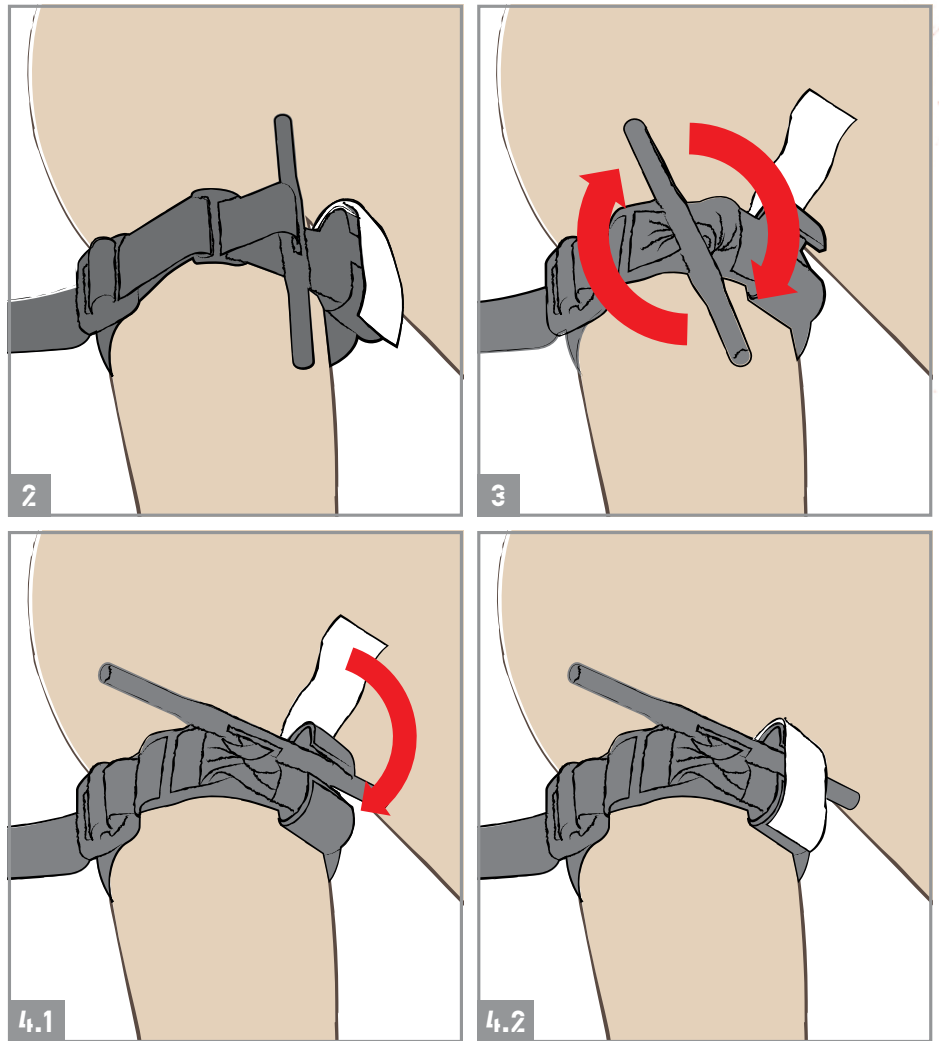
Step 1: Apply direct and indirect pressure on the wound. *Slow the bleeding down!* The hope is that you can turn a massive bleeder into a minor bleeder while you get out your TQ.

Step 2: Route the band around the limb as high on the extremity as possible. Pass the red tip through both sides of the friction adaptor and tighten the band as much as possible.

Step 3: Twist the rod (or windlass) until the bright red bleeding has stopped and the distal pulse is eliminated.

Step 4: Place the rod in the clip and lock it in place with the white Velcro strap. Check to be sure that the bleeding has stopped. If it has not, unlock the rod and tighten more, or apply a second tourniquet right next to the first one, further up on the extremity if possible.

Step 5: Always continue to reassess. Patient movement can potentially dislodge the TQ.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES TACTICAL TOURNIQUET-WIDE (SOFTT-W)



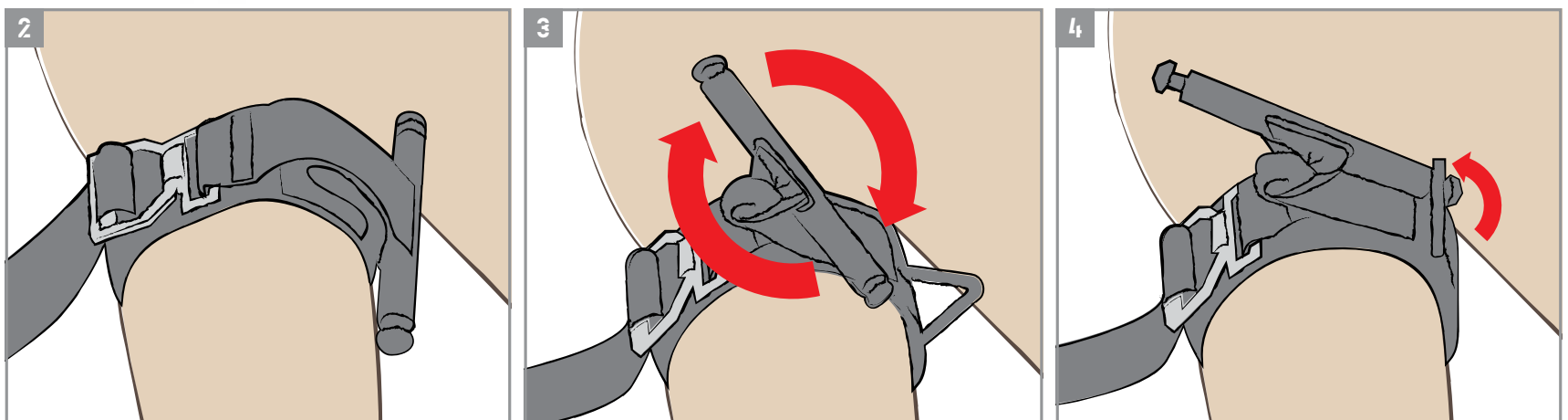
Step 1: Apply direct and indirect pressure on the wound. *Slow the bleeding down!*

Step 2: Route the band around the limb as high on the extremity as possible. Clip the two sides of the metal buckle together; you should feel them lock in place. Take the running end of the band and pull all of the slack out of the system until the band is very tight around the extremity.

Step 3: Twist the rod (or windlass) until the bright red bleeding has stopped and the distal pulse is eliminated.

Step 4: Place the rod in the plastic triangle to lock it in place. Check to be sure that the bleeding has stopped. If it has not, unlock the rod and tighten more, or apply a second tourniquet right next to the first one, further up on the extremity if possible.

Step 5: Always continue to reassess. Patient movement can potentially dislodge the TQ.



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RAPID APPLICATION TOURNIQUET SYSTEM (RATS)

Step 1: Apply direct and indirect pressure on the wound.

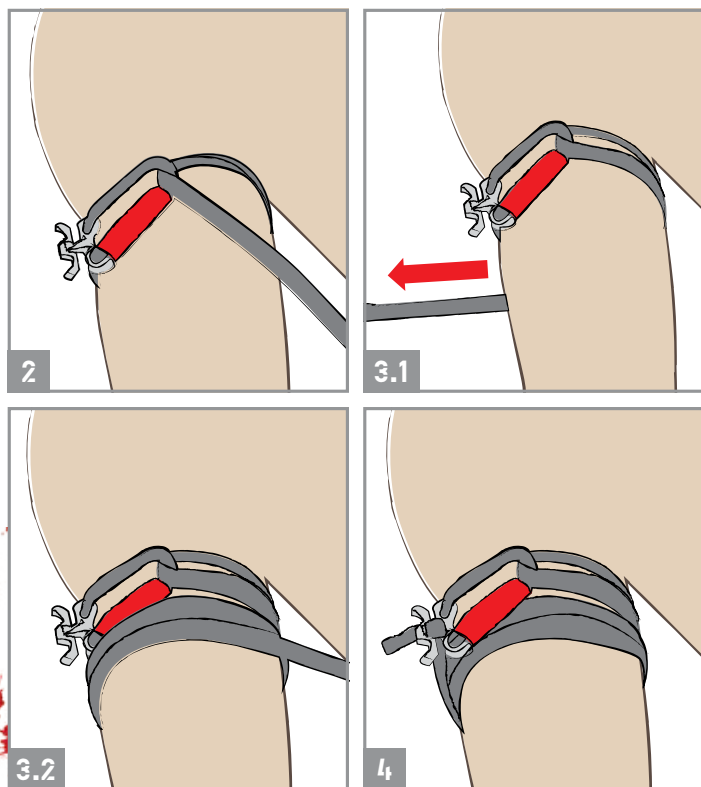
Slow the bleeding down!

Step 2: Route the band around the limb as high on the extremity as possible. Feed the free running end of the band through the loop in the band on the cleated end, forming a hitch.

Step 3: Using the running end of the band coming out of the hitch, continue to wrap the extremity nice and tight. You'll need one to two additional wraps around the extremity after the first wrap that ended at the hitch, for a total of two to three wraps of the band.

Step 4: To lock off the tourniquet, tuck the running end of the band into the arms of the cleat all the way to the middle. For extra security, you can do both sides of the cleat. Check to be sure that the bleeding has stopped. If it has not, unlock the band and tighten more by pulling the running end and then relock it, or apply a second tourniquet right next to the first one, further up on the extremity if possible.

Step 5: Always continue to reassess. Patient movement can potentially dislodge the tourniquet.



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THE BEST TQ?

We have a saying in the special-operations community: "The only thing two operators can agree on is how screwed up the third one is." I'm sure that could be extended to most shooters and tourniquets. We don't put random parts on our weapons and our med gear is no different. I would encourage you to keep an open mind and understand that there is a time and place for everything. And so it goes with TQ selection.

Choosing the right tool for the job depends on the environment and circumstances. For example, if I'm working within a military unit, I carry the tourniquet they are trained to use. If I'm bleeding out, I don't want someone digging around in my IFAK for the instruction manual. For my bug-out bag, it's the RATS all day long. It's the least expensive and most versatile TQ on the market. It's the only tourniquet I have ever used that is equally effective for adults, small children, and dogs. The SOFTT-W is the tourniquet of choice for vehicle-based activities (such as personal security detail) and mounted operations because it's the easiest to apply on a lower extremity of a seated patient. The buckle disconnects and can loop the leg without the strap having to be passed under the leg repeatedly as in the case of the RATS.

TOP 5 MOST COMMON TQ MISTAKES

1. Applying tourniquets to minor wounds that can be controlled with less aggressive means.
2. Weak understanding of tourniquet fundamentals, resulting in improper application (such as applying it too low on a limb rather than as close to the torso as you can).
3. Failing to apply the tourniquet tight enough to prevent blood from entering the extremity and/or exiting the wound.
4. Waiting too long to apply the tourniquet and failing to use direct pressure throughout the application process.
5. Failure to reassess after the initial application. Tourniquets *can* fail, so constantly reassess to determine if you need to tighten, adjust, or add a second tourniquet when appropriate.

Be a smart consumer and know what you're choosing and why. All of these tourniquets work for controlling extremity hemorrhage, so your best bet is to be familiar with all of them. After all, you never know if you'll ever have to use it to potentially save someone's life — or your own. **R**

» SOURCE

Dark Angel Medical: www.darkangelmedical.com



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joshua Vandenbrink was a U.S. Air Force pararescueman from 2001 to 2014. He deployed 19 times in Iraq, Africa, and Afghanistan as a pararescue jumper and in other U.S. government capacities. He's performed real-world search-and-rescue operations on land and in the water in Iceland and Alaska. In addition to his medical and rescue experience, he's an avid shooter with a great deal of time on foreign weapon systems.

Outside of work, Joshua has traveled the globe seeking outdoor adventures, from the Yukon to southern Chile. These days, he can be found in the backcountry of Colorado or teaching emergency medicine to civilians and the military around the United States.

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► BY DAVID REEDER

We continue striving to educate and edify RECOIL readers over on the web side so you stay in the know between print issues. If we create a little hate and discontent on occasion ... well, not every review can be all happiness and sunshine (not if we're going to be honest about things). As before, we'll expand upon what you read here in Issue 18, but will continue to bring in new voices and different perspectives. We've added a new woman to the lineup, competitive shooter Candice Horner, but I've also instructed the men on the team to look out past the range for some suitably manly stuff — you can celebrate masculinity without being a misogynist, and there's some badass manly shit out there to look at.

In the coming weeks you'll want to keep an eye on RECOILweb.com for Firelance Media's Matt Stagliano. He's going to discuss tracking, and how that detail and situational awareness-oriented skill impacts his everyday (not necessarily tactical) life. Ellen Pucciarelli will be talking about a "Citizen's Response to Active Shooter" course, her takeaways, and thoughts on the importance of reality-based training. I'm also going to talk about the Specialistes montagne of France's Groupe Montagne Gendarmerie, the mountain rescue unit of France's Gendarmerie. Thanks to Arc'teryx I was able to spend time on a glacier with Capt. Olivier Fernandez and Capt. Olivier Renard. I must give them their due.

In addition, be sure to check out what our head honcho, Iain Harrison, thought of the BCM Recce-14 KMRF Mk2 rifle in his video review at www.recoilweb.com/bcm_reece_14.

I'll also be talking some more about my visit to the Glock USA factory in Georgia back in February. I was privileged to have a private tour of the facility, then to check out the new Glock 43 before it was announced — not that the long-awaited, eagerly anticipated single-stack Glock 9mm is a big deal or anything... **R**



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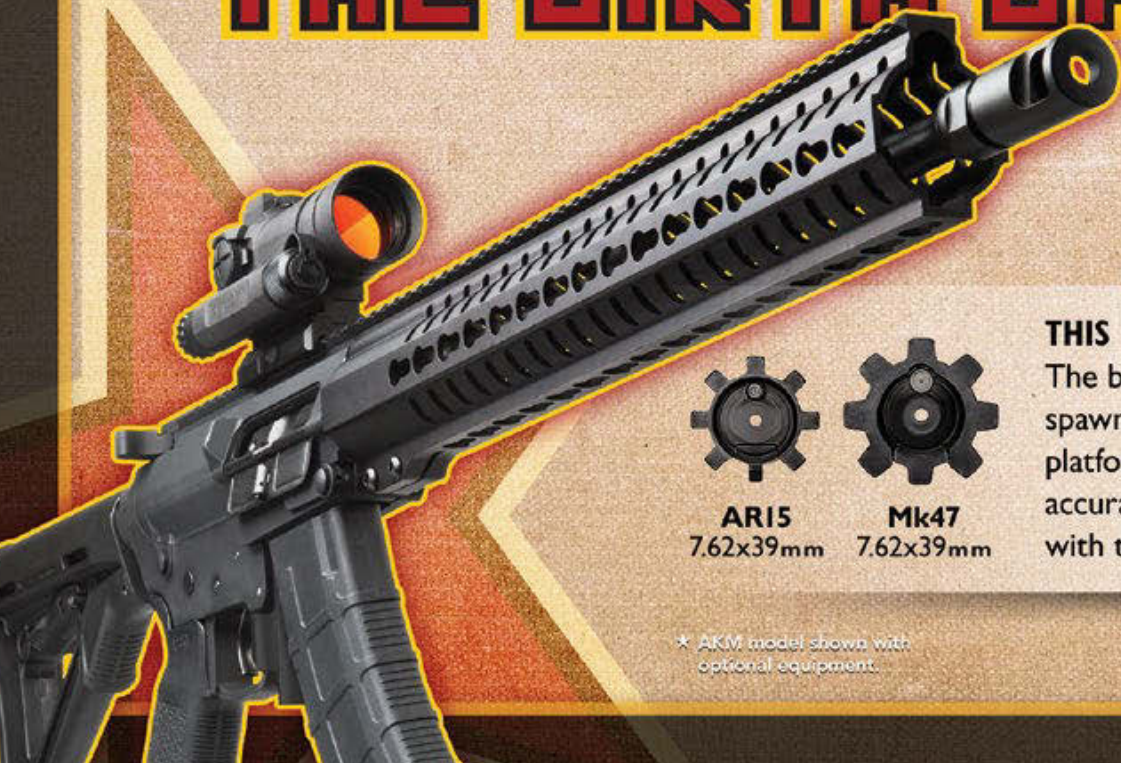
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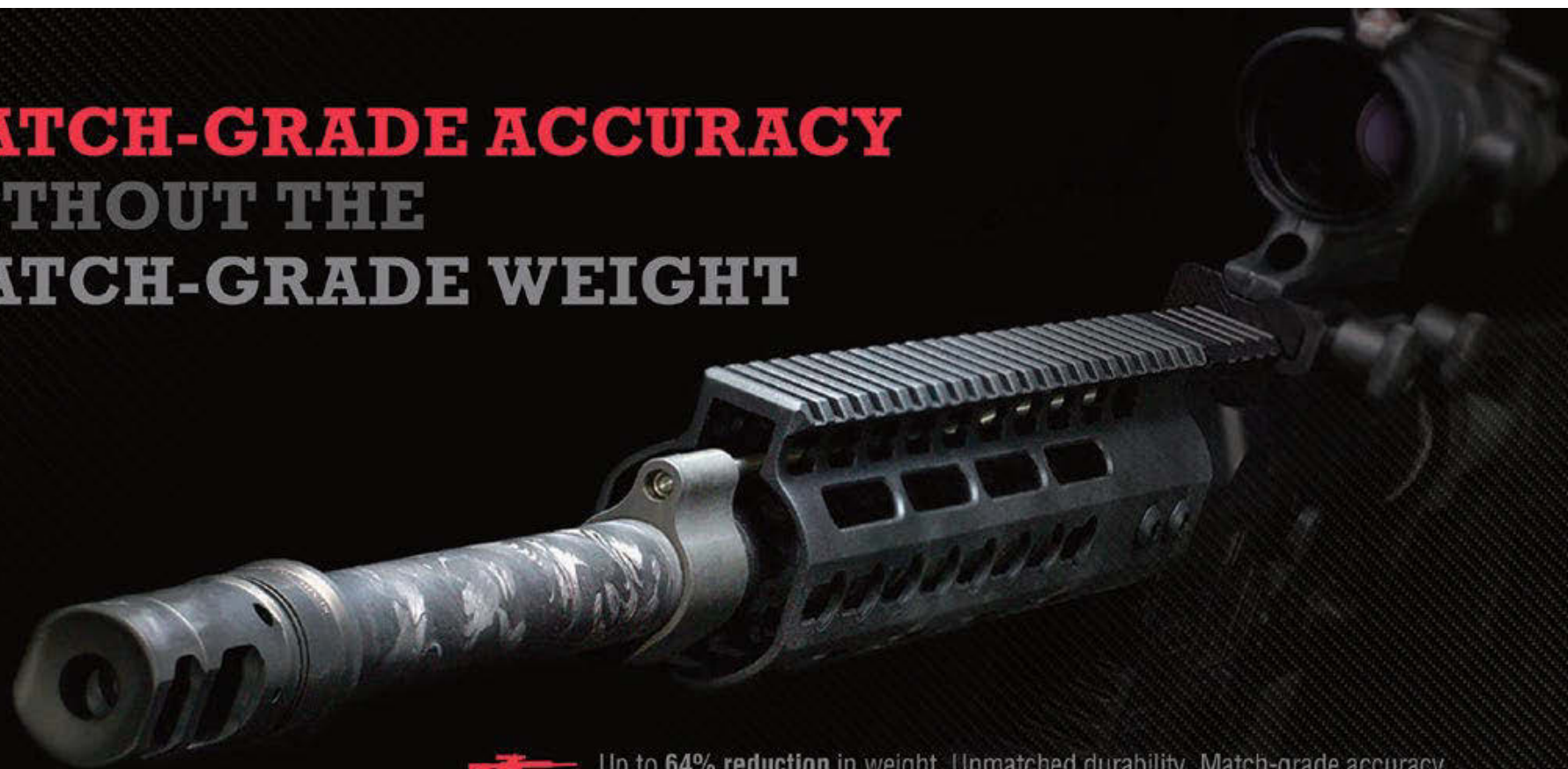


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PATCH:
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www.undergroundtactical.com

2 MAKE:
Rogue American
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COLORWAY:
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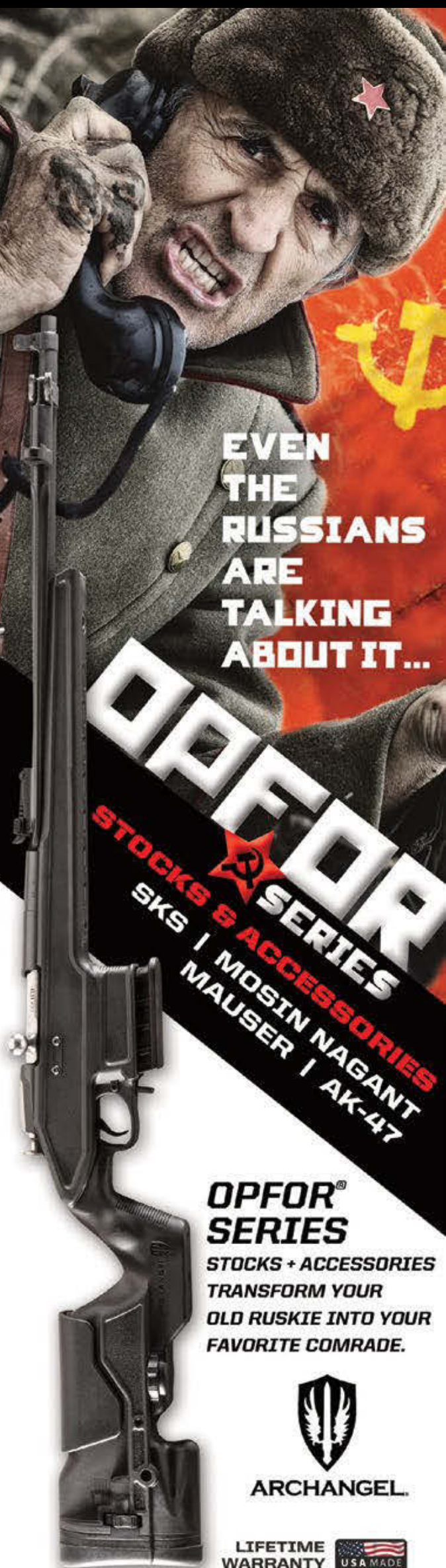
3 MAKE:
Mil-Spec Monkey
PATCH:
Pirateskull Flag
COLORWAY:
ACU-dark, ACU-light, desert, forest, MultiCam, and SWAT (shown)
MSRP:
\$5
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www.milspecmonkey.com/store/

4 MAKE:
Magpul
PATCH:
Magpul 10th Anniversary Patch
COLORWAY:
Desert tan, olive heather (shown), red, and white
MSRP:
\$6
URL:
www.magpul.com

5 MAKE:
Spike's Tactical
PATCH:
Punisher Cut Out
COLORWAY:
Black (shown), MultiCam, pink
MSRP:
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URL:
www.spiketactical.com

6 MAKE:
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